

HISTORY OF THE PORT OF LONDON



S. OWEN, del.

THE CUSTOM HOUSE (1828).

R. G. REEVES, sculpt.

**HISTORY OF THE PORT
OF LONDON** BY SIR JOSEPH
G. BROODBANK CHAIRMAN OF
THE DOCK & WAREHOUSE COM-
MITTEE OF THE PORT OF LONDON
AUTHORITY FROM 1909 TO 1920
IN TWO VOLUMES: VOLUME II

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CHAPTER XXVII

The Royal Commission Inquiry

THE Royal Warrant for this Commission is dated the 21st June, 1900.

The names of the Commissioners were :—

EARL EGERTON OF TATTON, Chairman
LORD REVELSTOKE
THE HON. ALFRED LYTTLETON
SIR ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B.
SIR JOHN WOLFE BARRY, K.C.B.
REAR-ADMIRAL SIR JOHN HEXT, K.C.I.E.
JOHN EDWARD ELLIS, M.P.

Lord Egerton was compelled through ill-health to resign his membership of the Commission on the 4th March, 1901, Lord Revelstoke was thereupon appointed chairman of the Commission, and the Hon. W. R. W. Peel, M.P., was appointed to fill the vacant seat on the Commission.

The terms of the reference were as follows :—

To inquire into the present administration of the Port and the water approaches thereto, the adequacy of the accommodation provided for vessels and the loading and unloading thereof, the system of charge for such accommodation and the arrangements for warehousing dutiable goods, and to report whether any change or improvement in regard to any of the above matters is necessary for the promotion of the trade of the Port and the public interest.

After having settled their procedure at a preliminary meeting held a week after their appointment, the Commission paid a series of visits to the lower river, to the docks and warehouses of the four dock companies, and to the principal private wharves of the Port. They also visited Liverpool and Manchester. Some of the members of the Commission visited other British ports and foreign ports. Questions on details germane to the inquiry were also put to the authorities of the principal British ports, whilst similar information from the British Consuls at Hamburg, Bremen, Antwerp, Dunkirk, Havre, and Rotterdam was obtained. The Committee also instructed Mr. R. C. H. Davidson, A.M.I.C.E., to report on the premises of the dock companies.

The Commission then proceeded to take evidence from witnesses representing the interests which desired to be heard. Thirty-one days were devoted to the reception of evidence, and 114 witnesses were examined. The chief interests represented were :—

THE COMMISSIONERS OF H.M. CUSTOMS
THE CITY CORPORATION
THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL
THE TRINITY HOUSE
THE GENERAL SHIPOWNERS SOCIETY
THE SHORT SEA TRADERS
THE LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
THE WHARFINGERS
THE LIGHTERMEN
THE THAMES CONSERVANCY
THE DOCK COMPANIES

The evidence may be summed up as a series of attacks upon the existing order of things, and the defence of those responsible for the administration of the Port. Only four bodies put forward schemes for future management, viz., the City Corporation, the London County Council, the London Chamber of Commerce, and the London and India Docks Company ; the rest of the criticism was destructive or negative.

Let us summarize the evidence of the interests in the order given above :—

The Customs were represented by their chairman, Sir George Ryder, and Mr. J. Fleming, surveyor general. After explaining the nature of the Customs arrangements in the Port, Sir George Ryder remarked that the scattering of wharves and warehouses over many miles of river, and the necessity of unloading the cargoes of vessels into lighters carrying goods night and day, caused trouble and expense to the Customs and risk to the revenue. The only complaints made in regard to the Customs being that charges for overtime attendance of their officers were excessive, Sir George intimated that he would be prepared to ask the Treasury to make concessions, but pointed out that the boon might in reality prove of little value to the merchant, though costly to the Exchequer, because the Customs charges were small compared with the other charges entailed on traders for labour by prolonging hours.

The City Corporation were in the happy position of having no criticism to meet with regard to the performance of the one duty left to them in the Port, namely, that of the Sanitary Authority. The function is a purely municipal one, and it is not surprising to find that the municipality with the longest experience in the world should have been found adequate to the fulfilment of the prime duty imposed on those who minister to the weal of local communities. In regard to the other matters before the Commission the views of the City Corporation were presented by the Lord Mayor, Sir Marcus Samuel, the chairman of the Shell Line. Sir Marcus had been one of the most assiduous exponents of the Port of London question during the agitation which preceded the appointment of the Commission. He had formed a Corporation Committee for the study of the question, and by holding public and private conferences at the Mansion House, had popularized the subject in the City and London generally. It is doubtful, however, whether the Corporation's interest in the subject was ever taken seriously. Nor did the members of the Guildhall Committee dive deeply into the question, for while in their report to the Corporation they made recommendations in regard to the treatment of the dock systems of the Port they omitted from consideration the Royal Albert and Victoria and the Tilbury Docks. It is not even clear that they were aware of the existence of these docks—the largest in the Port. Sir Marcus Samuel had his complaints to make as a shipowner as to the inadequacy of the sheds in the docks. He also favoured the provision of wharves on the river. This remedy for the ills of the Port will be dealt with in another chapter, but, as indicative of the misapprehensions which exist on this subject even in the minds of as experienced a business man as Sir Marcus Samuel is, reference may be made to an incident in which he was concerned. When the Corporation Committee were considering the report Sir Marcus Samuel asked that an opportunity might be given to them to visit the docks of the London and India Docks Company. One of the objects of the visit was to inspect a long jetty at Galleons Reach, which was a continuation of the pier-head adjoining the lower entrance of the Royal Albert Dock. On the party arriving at the jetty, Sir Marcus explained that it was in his opinion the

ideal accommodation for the Port. Passengers could be landed there and goods discharged there, and if the vessel wanted to go into the adjoining dock it was only a question of towing the vessel for a few hundred feet. The party's faith in this ideal had to be disillusionized by the statement that the jetty had been built forty years before, having in view the very purposes mentioned by Sir Marcus, but that not a single shipowner had ever made application for using it in this way, and that eventually it had to be let for the purpose for which jetties are eminently suited, viz., the discharge of vessels bringing coal and oil. Sir Marcus submitted to the Commission a scheme for the reorganization of the Port, which had been approved by the Corporation. He proposed the creation of a port with a jurisdiction extending from Richmond to a line drawn from the Naze to the North Foreland to be called the Thames River Dock and Harbour Board. The Board was to control both the river and the docks. A special tribunal was also to be constituted with powers like those of the Railway Commissioners to whom might be submitted questions relating to rates and charges arising between the new authority and its customers. The Board was to consist of forty persons. Ten were to be appointed by the Corporation, two by the Admiralty, two by the Board of Trade, two by the Trinity House, two by the railway companies, two by the Underwriters of Lloyds, and the remaining twenty by shipowners and others paying dues. The Board were to have power to purchase the property of the dock companies and such bonded wharves and warehouses as they might think fit, and to raise the capital necessary for that purpose and for deepening the channel of the river and for the general improvement of the Port. It was further proposed that the Board should be allowed to impose such taxes upon all goods entering or leaving the Port and upon shipping, lighters, and barges using the river as might be necessary or desirable to procure the income required to enable the necessary capital to be raised. The Imperial Government were to be asked to guarantee the stock of the Board, and the security would in that event be a trustee security. A statement put in by Sir Marcus showed that the Liverpool schedule of dues on goods if applied to London would yield £900,000 per annum. It was evident and not

unnatural that a shipowner like Sir Marcus should have looked to merchandise furnishing most, if not all, of the new revenue required by any new authority. Nor is it surprising that the Corporation were to have one-fourth of the representation on the managing committee, or that the City, having ignored the County Council as entitled to any share in municipal representation, should have asked for so little. What is incomprehensible is that it could be seriously proposed that the Government should guarantee interest, whilst a body not responsible to them should do the spending of the capital, and that such a proposition should emanate from a body claiming to be an ideally democratic institution.

The London County Council had ever since their establishment in 1889 been consistent advocates of reform in the Port of London. Some leading spirits were in favour of the municipalization of the Port, but this programme was never officially openly adopted by the Progressives, though, as we shall see, their proposals for reconstruction virtually entailed it. The Council were perhaps more responsible than any other body outside the dock companies for the circumstances that brought about the appointment of the Commission. Sir Edwin Cornwall, Mr. McKinnon Wood, and Mr. J. D. Gilbert had particularly identified themselves with the movement inside the Council and educated the electors unconnected with the Port as to the necessity for the question being dealt with as an urgent and imperative one in which the whole of London was interested. There can be no doubt that their concern was a perfectly sincere one, but unfortunately some of the Progressive Party's advocacy excited the suspicion of traders that it was not altogether commercial interests which were intended to be promoted, and so there had ensued a lack of co-operation which involved years of fruitless friction before the problem of the Port of London was finally solved.

The principal witness of the Council was their clerk, Mr. Lawrence Gomme. His evidence may be termed to be a mine of research and statistics most useful to the student who will study the figures without accepting unquestioningly the deductions of the witness. The facts were marshalled with two preconceived notions in mind: one, that the Port of London was going downhill as fast as the

Conservancy and dock companies could push it, and, secondly, that the appointed saviour of the community was the London County Council. The facts in his historic resumé of the Port cannot be challenged as facts, but the selection was simply evidence of the old connexion of the municipality with the Port. This was uncontrovertible, and it will be seen from what the reader has before him in this book that the connexion was not only ancient, but intimate. What Mr. Gomme, however, failed to point out was that Parliament in 1799 cut the first strand in the severance of that connexion, and that the process had been repeated time after time during the century until the connexion of the municipality with the Port had become a nominal one only. If the County Council had to rely upon the historic tendencies their case was indeed a weak one. Mr. Gomme relied on statistics to show that the business of London was a decaying one. He did not deny that the figures of tonnage entering the Port were increasing year by year (they had trebled in fifty years), but his contention was that it indicated the incipient decay of London to find that other ports were increasing at a greater ratio than London. In making this point he was following a favourite line of attack on the part of the critics, who compared the percentage increases of traffic in London with the much larger percentages of increases at Hamburg, Antwerp, Rotterdam, and Southampton. Such critics ignored the invariable rule that fully developed organizations rarely increase at so rapid a rate as those which have only just started. Sir Henry Le Marchant, in an article in the "National Review" written about this time, showed the fallacy of deductions from comparisons from tonnage figures. He assumed a new line to be established between London and Rotterdam and giving by repeated voyages a total tonnage to each port of 200,000 tons a year. The percentage of increase to London on its figure of 16,000,000 would only be 1.25 per cent. On Rotterdam's figure of 6,400,000 the percentage increase would be 3.12 per cent., and then an individual superficially looking at the subject would infer that London was losing ground when compared with Rotterdam. Another disturbance of inference from mere tonnage figures arises from the fact that some ports have more vessels bringing part of their cargoes only



A VIEW TAKEN NEAR THE STOREHOUSE AT DEPTFORD

From an engraving by J. BOYDELL, 1750

yet the full tonnage of the vessel itself is returned in the comparison. Again, some ports have more passenger vessels with little or no cargo, and others, like Antwerp, are ports where a larger proportion of the vessels are calling vessels, and, by coming in to discharge cargo and subsequently to load it, are reckoned twice in the tonnage statements issued by the Port concerned. Such qualifications of the inferences to be drawn from his statistical statements were apparently not dreamed of by Mr. Gomme. A particularly unfortunate illustration of his simple deductive methods was exposed by Mr. Scrutton, representing the Corporation of London. Mr. Gomme had submitted a statement showing a very large falling off in the number of steamers registered in the Port of London and using it as evidence of the unpopularity of the Port. There is, of course, no relation whatever between the registering of a ship at a particular port and its trading with that port. The reason why ship-owners were ceasing to register their vessels at London was simply the business one that if registered at London their vessels were not subject to compulsory pilotage and the shipowner was liable to be mulcted to the full extent in any claim for damage which might be done by the vessel, whilst if she were registered at, say, Greenock or Plymouth the shipowner was compelled to employ a pilot for navigating the river, and was not liable for damage.

One of the fallacies current at this time and expounded by Mr. Gomme on the part of the County Council was that relating to the divided authorities in the Port. Sir Edwin Cornwall, the chairman of the Rivers Committee of the Council, had gone so far as to say that the Port was controlled by fifty authorities. When asked to supply the list, the Council enumerated the Conservancy, the Trinity House, the Watermen's Company, the Metropolitan Police, and the Corporation of London, and forty-six others, including the dock companies, the South Eastern Railway, the Greenwich Pier Company, the Metropolitan Asylums Board, the wharfingers (who were treated as one authority), and many other occupants of premises abutting on the river. Sir Henry Le Marchant pointed out in the article already mentioned that if the list were correct in principle, the number was too few, because if, say, the South Eastern Railway were an authority in respect of their wharf, every

separate wharfinger on the Thames was also an authority, so that the number of authorities would be nearly 400, and not 50. The explanation is that the County Council had merely made a list of the occupants of river frontage (arriving at the number of fifty by adding individual owners to classes of owners) and had dignified them with the name of authorities. The only authorities were the five with which the list commenced. The attack on this point was misdirected. The County Council evidently imagined that with fifty authorities the management of those responsible for the Port was the scene of unceasing wrangling and contention between fussy members. There had been no internecine warfare of this kind ; if anything, the fault was rather too much content and self-seclusion if not supineness amongst the authorities, in the policy followed by each of the authorities in the execution of their duties. The defects of the Port arose not from division of responsibility, but from the fact that none of the authorities was charged with the duty of seeing that the Port was efficiently maintained or its accommodation improved to meet the demands of modern commerce. But this had been the logical result of the decision ruthlessly carried out year after year, come to by Parliament in 1824 of leaving the accommodation of the Port to the contingencies of an "open competition."

The County Council had their remedial scheme, and it was put forward on their behalf by Mr. McKinnon Wood, a former chairman of the Council. The Council proposed that a new authority should be formed to have jurisdiction over the tidal river between Teddington to a line between the Naze and the North Foreland, and that the authority should have transferred to it all the powers exercised by the Thames Conservancy, the City Corporation, the Trinity House, and the four dock companies whose undertakings were to be taken over. The authority was to consist of not more than thirty members, of whom ten were to be appointed by the Council, two by the Corporation, ten by shipowners, merchants, and others interested in the commerce of the Port elected on the Liverpool system by all who had paid £10 of port dues in the preceding year. The remaining members were to be appointed by the Board of Trade, the Admiralty, the Commissioners of Customs, and perhaps the Treasury. The capital necessary for the purchase of the

docks and for improvements and extension of docks and river channels was to be raised by the Council themselves on behalf of the Port Authority upon the security of the London rates. As a safeguard to the interests of the municipal ratepayers it was suggested that the Council should retain control over the capital expenditure in the Port. Unlike all other schemes put forward, this scheme contained no provision that all goods landed in the Port should contribute to its maintenance. The Council looked for revenue to the present sources of income of the dock companies, the Thames Conservancy, and the other authorities absorbed, and if this income was not sufficient to meet liabilities the Council proposed that it should be supplemented by a subsidy from the rates of the metropolis. The further suggestion was made that the Imperial Government should be asked to contribute to the upkeep of the Port on the ground that the trade of the capital was not only a matter of local, but of national concern, and that it was threatened by the competition of foreign ports. The ulterior aim of the Council was not concealed by the willingness to be satisfied with only one-third of the managing committee. It was patent to all that by controlling capital expenditure they would control everything. This had been clearly proved by the experience of the London Company in its working union with the East and West India Dock Company. The guarantee of interest was also a guarantee that as soon as it was honoured the cry would be set up through London that he who pays should call the tune, and the inevitable end would be the conversion of the Port into a department of the Council. But there was another objection to this part of the Council's proposal. The revenue of the dock companies was mostly derived from services connected with the handling and warehousing of goods. In this business they were in direct competition with the wharfingers, and it was held that it would be unfair for them to have to meet a competition which would be subsidized out of the metropolitan rates. The general sympathy with this aspect of the case had perhaps more weight in the rejection of the Council's scheme than even the desire to keep local politics out of the administration of the Port.

The appearance of the Trinity House at the Commission was merely to give information to the members. They had

no attacks to meet, and attention was chiefly directed to anomalies in pilotage law. Only a few complaints as to the pilotage charges in the Port were made. On the question whether the lighting and buoying of the Port should be handed over to any new authority to be created the opinion was expressed by some shipowners that the buoying and lighting within the limits of the Port should be transferred from the Trinity House to the Port Authority, but Captain Vyvyan, on behalf of the Trinity House, contended that the Port, surrounded as it was by dangerous sands, was in need of special protection, and that the Trinity members were men known to be possessed of knowledge peculiarly adapted by nautical experience of the duties of buoying and lighting the channels to perform the functions requisite in the supervision of pilots and pilotage. On the score of economy, he urged that it was cheaper to continue to employ the existing machinery than to set up new machinery for this purpose. The fact that at most of the great ports the pilotage was controlled either by the Port Authority or a special commission detracted from the force of Captain Vyvyan's arguments. The fact that the Trinity House had always so admirably performed their work in the Thames was perhaps the best argument for letting things alone.

The London Chamber of Commerce, chiefly consisting of merchants and manufacturers in the Port of London, appeared by Mr. John Innes Rogers, their vice-chairman, supported by a large number of witnesses. The evidence was mostly on the question of delays in the delivery of their cargoes and the excessive charges for their service. The body of testimony organized to prove the truth of these complaints was a tribute to the industry and zeal of the Chamber in furthering the interests of its members, but the evidence was characterized by a tone of hostility to the dock companies. Summed up, the defects of the Port were described by the Chamber of Commerce as follows :—

1. Insufficient facilities and inefficient appliances.
2. Insufficient depth of channel.
3. A confusing division of Authority in the Port.
4. Delays in berthing vessels and unloading of same.
5. The unsatisfactory lighterage system.
6. Slowness of delivery.
7. Defective rail communication.
8. Excessive dock charges.

The instances given in illustration of these complaints need not be recapitulated, but it is necessary to deal with the conclusion drawn by many of the merchants that to the costliness of doing business in the Port of London was attributable the losses in the entrepôt trade of London to the benefit of foreign ports. Undoubtedly it could be shown that London dock warehousing charges were higher than those in force at Hamburg, Antwerp, or Rotterdam, but the obvious answer was ignored that dock companies had to earn a living as well as merchants, and that the dividends paid by them were not such as could be considered even fair return on the capital invested. It was equally ignored that London, both river and docks, was an absolutely free port for goods, and that if the dock warehousing or quay charges were excessive, consignees of goods were at liberty to warehouse their goods elsewhere or provide their own depots. There was no compulsion on anyone to incur dock charges either on the goods or the barges carrying them in or out of the docks. These representatives of merchants overlooked that the Continental ports, being owned by the State or the municipality, were able to offer inducements to shipping and goods not within the practical politics of a commercial company. The development of German steamship enterprise in offering facilities of direct shipments of raw materials from the colonies to Continental ports was even a more important factor equally ignored or forgotten.

The question of slow dispatch was put down by the Chamber to inadequate accommodation and plant. No advocate of the docks would wish to assert that everything was perfection in this respect, especially in the older docks. But the dock companies could point out that the largest vessel then afloat, the *Celtic*, could be accommodated in the Port, that for many years no vessel had ever had to wait for a berth in the Thames docks, and that no port was, on the whole, so well equipped with sheds and cranes. That London was a slow port in obtaining deliveries of cargoes had to be admitted, but this was due chiefly to the employment of barges in taking deliveries. Barges provide the cheapest method of conveyance in the Port, carrying goods for thirty miles at the same cost as would be payable for one mile of road conveyance. But the method of conveyance is undoubtedly slow. In London, with its scattered

areas and long distances, it is, however, the only practical form of conveyance for 95 per cent. of the goods discharged from ships in the Port. In any case, it could not be the dock companies' fault, as shipowners have the option of discharging their own ships, and almost invariably exercise that option. The delays complained of arise largely from the necessities of the situation and, amongst others, from the fact that London cargoes are generally mixed cargoes, and in order that they may be sorted for delivery such cargoes are first landed instead of being delivered over the ship's side direct to craft. If the delivery were to rail trucks or carts at the rear of the sheds there would be no more delay with mixed cargoes than at Liverpool, but as barges are employed it is necessary to have parcels completely sorted in order to get full freights, and this cannot be done until after the ship is emptied. Hence, deliveries often cannot commence till five or six days after the ship's arrival in dock. Various expedients were proposed to the Commission for accelerating deliveries, including right-angled jetties such as are provided at the Victoria Dock and barge canals at the back of the sorting shed. All the remedies bring their own drawbacks with them. In the Albert Dock extension an attempt is now being made to deal with the problem by the erection of jetties parallel to the quay line and connected by a bridge with the quay itself, but it is not anticipated that this will do more than act as a palliative, whilst the rent for the occupation of such berths must be on a higher scale than that applicable to ordinary berths.

On the completion of his evidence, Mr. Innes Rogers submitted the proposals for reform of the Port suggested by the Chamber of Commerce. Like the County Council, the Chamber contemplated placing the control of the Port and docks under one authority, "the London Harbour Trust," the limits of the Port being defined as between Richmond Lock to Yantlet Creek, with power to dredge beyond Yantlet Creek where necessary. The powers to be transferred were the whole of the powers of the existing authorities on the Thames, including the control of pilotage. The Trust proposed was to be constituted of forty-nine members as follows :—

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|---|
| Corporation of London | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6 |
| London County Council | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6 |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Admiralty | 1 |
| War Office | 1 |
| Treasury | 1 |
| Board of Trade | 1 |
| Chairman of Customs | 1 |
| Secretary of Customs | 1 |
| Thames Conservancy | 2 |
| Trinity House | 2 |
| London Chamber of Commerce | 2 |
| Shipowners, sailing barge and tug owners, lighter- men, short sea traders, public and private wharf- ingers, merchants, and manufacturers | 25 |
| | <hr/> 49 <hr/> |

The Chamber proposed that the Trust should possess the sole right of constructing new docks in the Port, that it should have the power of compulsory purchase over riverside property, and that the whole of the property of the existing docks should be vested in the Trust. The Trust was, however, to sell or lease as soon as possible all water basins, warehouses, sheds, cranes, locks, lighters, or other property that might not be required for the fulfilment of its duties as a Trust for the water area of the Port. The Trust was to be expressly forbidden to undertake warehousing. The Chamber estimated that after sales had been effected the cost of the purchase of the water area and dock quay would be £9,000,000, the cost of modernizing the docks £4,000,000, and of deepening the river £2,000,000. The sources of revenue proposed were the existing sources of the lower navigation of the Thames Conservancy, the Watermen's Company, and the dock companies, with additional revenue to be derived from dues upon all goods landed within the jurisdiction of the Trust. The Chamber further suggested that the City Corporation and the London County Council should have the opportunity of assisting by guaranteeing the interest on the capital outlay of the Trust.

The case of the shipowners was presented by several witnesses drawn both from the ocean and short sea traders. The subjects of complaint were naturally divided into two : the river channel and the dock accommodation. Sir Thomas Sutherland wanted the river channel deepened to 26 feet at low spring tides with a width of 500 feet. Mr. Becket Hill,

a director of the Allan Line, concurred. Sir Edwyn Dawes thought that Sir Thomas Sutherland's ideas were narrowed by the fact that the draft of the P. and O. Company's steamers was fixed by the depth of the Suez Canal, and that as the White Star steamers trading to Australia were drawing $32\frac{1}{2}$ feet of water, he proposed that the minimum low water depth of the improved channel should be 30 feet. Mr. Richard Cattarns, on behalf of the short sea traders, emphasized the claim that they required the deepening of the river even more urgently than the ocean shipowners, because the short sea traders were running in competition with the railway companies and had to catch markets, and were therefore unable to maintain their services if they could not rely on sufficient depth of water to enable them to reach their berths in the upper river.

The complaints of shipowners against the docks chiefly related to the inadequacy of the existing quay and berth accommodation for vessels, and in some cases of the entrance locks and depth of water in the docks, to meet the increased and increasing dimensions of modern steamships. The shipowners asked for another large and commodious deep water dock provided with all modern appliances for rapid discharging and loading. The complaints also extended to the inadequacy of the existing quay space and sorting sheds to receive the increasing bulk of modern cargoes and to give facilities for their rapid sorting and delivery. It was urged that there was special need for accommodation for refrigerated produce. Better access to the quays for barges was also suggested in order to remove delays and clear cargoes more easily. The shipowners complained further of the congestion at the docks caused by barges being allowed to float unattended in the docks, impeding the movement of ships. A general complaint was also made as to the insufficiency of the graving docks, cranes, tugs, and other dock plant. Figures were put in showing that the general conditions in the Port of London enhanced the cost of using the Port. A case was given by Mr. Pembroke of a ship from Rangoon with the same class of cargo discharging on one occasion at London and on the other at Liverpool, and it was stated that though the vessel carried 500 tons more cargo when she discharged at Liverpool, the expenses were £367 less than in London. Other cases which he quoted



MISERIES OF LONDON.

Entering upon any of the bridges of London, or any of the passages leading to the Thames, being assailed by a gang of watermen, holding up their hands and bawling out *Vars Sculls, Sculls Vars Oars*.

Engraved July 14 1781 by T. Rowlandson & George Thompson.

WAPPING OLD STAIRS

From an engraving by T. Rowlandson

gave results in a less degree of the same kind. Sir Alfred Jones, who had experience of London, Liverpool, and Bristol, put in figures to support his statement that while London cost about the same as Liverpool and Avonmouth, the dispatch was five times as bad in the case of the large vessel in London.

The short sea traders, again speaking through Mr. Cattarns, while desiring improvement in the river channels, had no criticism to make of the docks, and attributed it to the fact that their steamers used the upper docks, which were kept in order by the competition of the wharves. They considered that the difficulties in London had been exaggerated and that there was not sufficient justification for complaint against the docks, though there was room for some improvement in their appliances and possibly in the arrangements of their quays and sheds.

Neither of the two sections of shipowners had any detailed scheme to offer for the future management of the Port. They confined themselves to broad principles. The short sea traders wanted a central authority to take over the general administration of the Port and to extend, improve, and add to the facilities of the Port. They were strongly adverse to the purchase of the docks or to financial assistance being given to them. They thought that the Authority should devote itself to broadening the channel and deepening the bed of the river, to embanking its sides and providing deep quays along it. They alleged also that any taxation of goods traffic or a substantial tax on lighters was undesirable in view of the competition of foreign ports, directing special attention in this regard to the transshipment and entrepôt trades which had suffered by the diversion of traffic to Hamburg and Antwerp. On the other hand, the ocean-going shipowners, speaking generally, through Sir Thomas Sutherland, favoured an entire change in the system of the Port, and advocated that in the interests of public policy the administration of the Port and the docks should be in the hands of an authority constituted *ad hoc*, which should have powers not likely to be given either to the present conservancy or to the dock companies, to impose such dues either on ships or river craft or on goods as would appear to be necessary for the purpose of raising a sufficient revenue for the improvement of the Port and dock

extensions or the construction of wharves in whatever direction may be found necessary. The revenue should he thought be raised from ships and goods. Sir Edwyn Dawes, perhaps because he had been an old dock director, was no enthusiast as to the transfer of the docks to a public authority, but was prepared to acquiesce if it were found impossible to give the dock companies the requisite power.

The programme of the wharfingers was to guard against the possibility of their privileges being withdrawn or modified. On this question their interest coincided with that of the merchants. Their attacks on the existing order of things was confined to grumbles as to the slow delivery to barges—a curious criticism, in view of the fact that the delays were due to a system of delivery which protected them from paying any toll for the facility of receiving goods in safe quiet waters. Their efforts were directed to the modification of the system under which the working lightermen were licensed by the Watermen's Company. The case was put as follows: They urged that the restriction forbidding the navigation of the river to any but licensed men was based on reasons now obsolete. In old days, when the river was the great highway of London passenger traffic, it was thought necessary to adopt a system of licensing with a view to ensuring the safety of passengers in small boats, and these conditions had entirely changed. The barge owners, being subject to full liability in respect of accidents to life and goods, had sufficient interest to make them employ only skilled men upon their barges. To a large extent oars as the means of propulsion had been replaced by steam tugs, on which it was not necessary to carry licensed men, so that less special skill was required of men in attendance on lighters. The rules did not ensure competence, because a boy of sixteen who had been an apprentice could obtain a licence, whilst the right of navigation was denied to skilful men from the Medway who might have no licence. No such restrictive system existed in any other British port, and it was a serious menace to London that the existence of the monopoly entailed the risk of its water trade being entirely stopped by a dispute between the lightermen and the masters.

The answer of the lightermen may conveniently be interposed here. It was that if there was no system of

qualifying there would be great danger to life and property, because men inadequately skilled would be employed in times of emergency. Stress was laid upon the argument that the system offered a guarantee of honesty of the men employed in charge of valuable cargoes of dutiable goods. The point about other ports was met by the statement that in the difficulties of navigation the Thames differed from other ports. The Watermen's Company added that as licences had to be renewed every three years and discipline was enforced by fines and penalties the public had guarantees of the continued efficiency and good conduct of the men.

While submitting no scheme of reform of the Port, the wharfingers contended that if the docks were acquired by a public authority the warehouses should not be worked by the authority but sold or let to persons who would carry on the warehouses as private ventures in the warehousing business.

As regards the bodies which controlled the two great spheres of operations in the Port (the Conservancy and the dock companies) the Conservancy had little to meet on the question of their administration of the navigation or in relation to their licensing of embankments on the river. The gravamen of the charge against them was the neglect to carry out the mandate of the 1894 Act to deepen the river. The explanation of the Conservators is anticipated in the chapter on the Thames Conservancy and need not therefore be repeated here. The best defence which the Conservancy found for themselves against the accusation of inertness on the question of deepening was that until the depth of water over the sills of all the docks had been much increased there would be no practical advantage in forming the proposed 30-foot channel, as vessels would have to wait at the dock entrances until the tide had risen sufficiently to enable them to enter the docks, and that lying outside the docks they would block the river traffic. The Commission did not hesitate to offer their opinion at a very early stage on this question, so that any strong representations from shipowners became almost unnecessary. Before making their report the Commissioners called upon the Conservancy forthwith to reconsider their policy, and while the sittings of the Commission were proceeding the conservators passed a resolution that "In view of the tendency to increase the

size and draught of the ocean-going steamers, the Conservators, though not admitting that the report of the Lower Thames Navigation Commission contains a specific recommendation that a navigable channel of 30 feet below low water of spring tides should be provided up to Gravesend, are prepared to provide such a channel if Parliament considers it desirable, and will provide the means for raising the necessary funds." The Commissioners having asked for the cost of such a channel continued up to the Albert Dock, the Chairman of the Conservancy produced an estimate of £1,649,838 for the deepening, and £45,000 for new moorings. The consequent increased expenditure, including additional cost of maintenance as well as the charge for interest, was put at £160,000 a year, bringing the total expenditure on the lower river up to £235,000 per annum. The Conservancy suggested that the additional income required might be derived in the following manner :

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Increase of tonnage dues from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per ton on coastwise vessels, and on foreign trade vessels from $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to 1d., yielding | £ 24,000 |
| Abolition of exemption from tonnage dues of certain vessels (except fishing boats) | 4,000 |
| Imposition of dues for use of river and moorings for vessels not paying tonnage dues | 10,000 |
| Imposition of dues on vessels using moorings for loading or discharging cargo | 15,000 |
| Dues on goods to extent of one-fifth of those charged upon the Tyne | 100,000 |
| Total | <u>£153,000</u> |

All the dock companies were represented by witnesses at the inquiry. The case of each was on almost similar lines, and in order to avoid repetition the evidence of the Surrey Commercial or Millwall Dock Companies need not be referred to, but it will suffice to deal with that of the London and India Docks Company, who were by far the most important company, owning 80 per cent. of the accommodation worked by the dock companies.

The London and India Docks Company were represented by four witnesses. Mr. H. C. Baggally, the chief engineer, gave evidence on questions relating to the construction and maintenance of docks. Mr. Thomas Hardy, one of the managers, explained details of management

in reply to some of the complaints as to practice and charges. Mr. J. G. Broodbank, the secretary, submitted reports on the accommodation and trade at some of the foreign ports which had been commended as models for imitation by various witnesses. Mr. C. J. Cater Scott, the chairman of the company, was the chief spokesman for the company, and he may be deemed to have been the most important witness in the whole of the proceedings. Mr. Scott was under examination for three and a half days, and in their report the Commissioners selected him from all the witnesses to express their high appreciation of the conspicuous care and ability which characterized his evidence. He gave a long historical survey of the establishment of the companies, embracing much of what has been recorded in the previous pages, and he replied to many of the attacks on the accommodation of the docks, the custom of the Port and the charges of the dock companies on the lines of the comments made earlier in this chapter upon the evidence given by the witnesses of the County Council, London Chamber of Commerce, and the other interests before the Commission. Mr. Scott's chief task was, however, to endeavour to persuade the Commissioners to accept the principle of his company's Bill for imposing charges on barges and the goods carried by them. It may be convenient to sum up his arguments exactly in the way he did at the Commission :

1. The history of the docks proved them to have been a public necessity and benefit and an incalculable saving to the revenue.

2. The privilege of exemption from charges on their barges and goods originally granted to wharfingers was in return for the compulsory diversion of their business to the docks, and when the expiry of the monopolies was followed by the extension of the legal quay and bonded warehouse system, the exemption largely assisted the wharfingers to compete with the docks on advantageous terms, and had therefore become both inapplicable and inequitable.

3. The position of the docks in relation to their warehousing business had been prejudiced by the wholesale revolution in the conditions of shipping by the introduction of steamships, which were growing in size and numbers.

4. The growing size of lighters themselves added to the onerous obligations cast upon the docks.

5. The tendency of steamers was to bring goods for shipment overside into lighters with a view to delivery elsewhere, or to be taken into immediate consumption.

6. The Free Trade policy of the country by reducing the

number of dutiable goods had depreciated the value of bonded accommodation of the docks.

7. The low freights earned by shipowners made it inequitable to raise shipping charges, whilst it was quite equitable that the low price of goods should be slightly increased, and that such increase would fall lightly on the consumer.

8. The dues payable by vessels were insufficient to pay the proper proportion of the interest upon the vast capital outlay upon the docks, because so large a proportion of vessels in the shape of lighters pay no dues.

9. The docks were legally vested in the companies, and to use their premises without return constituted in effect a trespass which, though originally sanctioned by Parliament, was no longer justified by any countervailing rights or privileges.

10. The river was freely used by all, and the wharfingers had therefore spent no money on their waterways, whilst the dock companies provided the dock waterways at their own expense.

11. Wharfingers who possessed jetties or small docks had a perfect right to make what charges they pleased on barges or goods.

12. Lighters that used the docks were ill-found in equipment and were not even supplied with sufficient men to work them, thus throwing on the docks a large amount of voluntary labour which the necessities of business alone rendered practically compulsory.

13. The tonnage of lighters using the docks was nearly double the total tonnage of foreign trading and coasting vessels entering with cargoes. In earlier times the proportion of barges to vessels was negligible.

14. At the time the docks were made every vessel could discharge in the river. Now, the docks were the only place in which the bulk of modern steamers could be discharged, and if the docks were unable from want of funds to meet the requirements of the Port the business of wharfingers would soon cease.

15. All the advantages of the Port were in favour of the competitors of the docks.

16. The docks of the greatest port in the world ought not to be so crippled as only to be able to pay 2 per cent. dividend to the largest company.

17. All the conditions of commerce which justified the original exemptions have long since ceased to exist, and that the main argument which accounted for the rejection of the 1855 Bill (i.e., the financial prosperity of the companies) could no longer be used against the companies.

18. A crisis had now arrived, and if the company were to exact increased duties the people to pay should be those who enjoy the use of the docks gratuitously.

19. Parliament had at frequent intervals during the past century recognized the justice of imposing the charges for which the dock companies asked by granting them to numerous other docks and harbours.





THE NEW DOCK AT WAPPING
By WILLIAM DANIELL. 1803

Convincing as these arguments seemed to the dock companies, they naturally failed to receive any support whatever from any of the other parties before the Commission. Nor indeed did the dock directors ever entertain any serious expectation that the powers they sought, whatever the equities of the case might be, would be conferred upon a private company. The opponents of the companies made the most of the fact that there was no precedent for restoring the fortunes of a company by enhanced powers of taxing the public. The object of the directors from the beginning of the proceedings leading to the appointment of the Commission, and also by the steps they subsequently took when the report of the Commission seemed likely to share the fate of many other Commission reports, was not merely to increase dividends, but simply to obtain such a revolution of the impossible conditions as would ensure the prosperity of the Port, with fair dealing for the dock companies who had served the Port. The question of merely improving their income was soon disposed of when the directors saw that there was no chance of what they believed to be the right method of adjustment of charges being generally acceptable. They simply resolved to use their unexercised powers forthwith, and at the end of 1901 gave notice that they would raise the dues on shipping from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per ton. The year 1902 was a good year for business and at its close the directors were able to declare dividends of 4 per cent. on their deferred stocks, equivalent to a dividend of this amount on the old ordinary stocks of the London and St. Katharine and East and West India Companies.

Let us return to Mr. Scott's evidence. On being invited to express his views upon the question of the formation of a public authority, he remarked on the financial side of the question that he did not think that the London County Council would be in any better position to raise money than the dock companies if the latter had proper powers of income given to them, nor did he think that the London County Council would easily raise the £30,000,000 which he estimated would be required to purchase the docks. He considered that it would not be to the advantage of the Port to give a monopoly of the accommodation in the river and docks to any public body whether rate-aided or

otherwise, and yet it would be unfair to leave wharfingers out of any scheme at the mercy of competition of such a powerful body. He could not treat seriously the proposal to form a trust that should purchase certain selected parts of the dock companies' premises, and in regard to the suggestion that the dock undertakings might be taken as a whole and the warehouses subsequently disposed of, he pointed out that the docks were originally built to serve the warehouses, and that at the older docks where most of the warehouses were situated, such a division would be impossible, while it would be difficult even at the lower docks. Water frontage was vital for warehousing business, and there could not be two authorities on the same dock frontage. Such a division of authority would be both practically unworkable and economically unsound. Common to all schemes was the difficulty that to ascertain the compensation to be paid to the various parties to be expropriated would be a long and tedious process, and it would consequently be several years before any trust could assume definite shape. In the meantime the needs of the Port, which were constantly growing, would remain unsatisfied. Nor were there wanted warnings against municipalities or quasi-municipalities in the form of public trusts embarking or being interested pecuniarily in dock enterprises. Bristol ratepayers were then contributing £28,000 a year towards making up deficiencies in the working of the Bristol and Avonmouth Docks. Preston had speculated in docks and in the deepening of the Ribble, and in consequence were suffering from a special rate of 2s. in the £. The Corporation of Manchester had advanced £5,000,000 to the Manchester Ship Canal Company and a rate of 1s. per £ was being levied on the Manchester ratepayers to meet the unearned interest, to which the principal contributors were the railway companies with whom the canal company was the principal competitor. The Greenock Harbour Trust had for many years defaulted in part of the interest on its debenture stock.

Mr. Scott made on behalf of his company a proposal that the companies should be given power to charge dues on barges to the extent of a maximum rate of 4d. a ton, estimated on the basis of 3d. a ton to produce the sum of £56,250, and also to levy dues on goods estimated to produce

£177,833. In consideration of the above powers his dock company were prepared to agree :

1. That the reasonableness of the charges on goods as between the different classes of goods should be subject to the right of appeal to the Railway Commissioners.

2. That in place of the maximum tonnage dues of 1s. 6d. with rent at the rate of 2d. a ton from the date of entrance now authorized as chargeable on shipping, there should be substituted maximum dues of 1s. 4d., to include freedom from rent for four weeks.

3. That the maximum dividend to be paid on capital stocks of the company should be 4 per cent., and that any surplus should be applicable to any of the following purposes only, viz. : (a) making good the deficiency of any previous dividend from the date of obtaining the powers, (b) the redemption of loan capital, (c) the provision of a reserve fund not exceeding 10 per cent. of the nominal amount of the capital stocks of the company, (d) the reduction of charges on goods and shipping.

4. That the company undertake to complete with all dispatch the proposed extension to the south of the Albert Dock.

Under Mr. Scott's scheme the supreme authority in the Port would have controlled all matters relating to the waterways, leaving questions of accommodation to private enterprise. He contended that there would then be no difficulty arising from competition of a public body with the private wharfingers, no need for any financial scheme, or any necessity to have recourse to local or imperial taxation. Moreover, the financial position of the companies would have been fixed and stabilized, and purchase by a Port Authority would have been a comparatively simple matter should circumstances hereafter render that course practicable and desirable.

Counsel were heard on behalf of the various parties before the Commission, and the last public meeting of the Commission took place on the 2nd July, 1901.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Royal Commission Report

THE report of the Commissioners is a lengthy document of 124 folio pages, and is dated the 16th June, 1902. Its contents include a comprehensive survey of the character of the Port and its trade, a statement of the existing authorities on the Thames, and a history and description of the dock undertakings with particulars of the various complaints of shipowners and consignees. This is followed by a discussion of the schemes of reform put before them, and the Commissioners own recommendations for dealing with the great problem submitted to them. Whatever prejudices prevailed in the minds of the interests who were so vitally concerned, all of them were constrained to admit that the Commissioners had performed their duty impartially and patiently, and that the report was one entitled to the careful consideration of the Government.

The Commissioners begin by saying that London is a Port traversed by a long and sheltered tidal river conveniently situated for trading with the various coasts of this country, with the Continent and with other parts of the world, and that this fact had largely contributed to its rise to the position of the greatest city in England and so to that of the central city of the British Empire. So great are the natural advantages of the river that little had been done, except some desultory dredging, to improve its condition since those almost prehistoric conditions when it was embanked. They pointed out that the chief obstruction to navigation between the Nore and Gravesend was at the Leigh Middle Shoals, where there was only a low water depth of 24 feet at spring tides. Above Gravesend a depth of 30 feet could be relied on up to Broadness Point. Off Broadness Point considerable shoaling limited the depth to 20 feet, though the greatest depth is from 30 to 40 feet. Throughout the length of Long Reach to Crayfordness the limitation of depth was about 24 feet. Then the channel became patchy and ill-defined, and the depth between Crayfordness and Jenningtree Point could only be taken

as 18 feet. A still further deterioration took place on entering Halfway Reach where, up to Crossness, the limitation of depth would be about 17 feet. From Crossness to Margaretness the channel, though deeper in parts, was much contracted in width, and the depth must be taken as 14 feet. An improvement takes place on entering Galleons Reach, and from the Albert Dock to Woolwich the depth might be taken as 16 feet. From Woolwich Dockyard to the Greenland Dock the limitation must be taken as about 12 feet, and beyond to Limehouse Dock at about 10 feet. From Limehouse Dock to St. Katharine Dock, the depth was from 12 to 16 feet.

Two points must be borne in mind when these depths are considered, one that from 17 to 22 feet must be added to the depths to obtain the navigable depth at spring tides, and the second that in arriving at the figures, the Commission adopted the widths of channel proposed by the Conservancy in their scheme of deepening, and that the depths mentioned were the minimum depths within the sideway boundaries of the bottom of the channel in question. The Commissioners explained that it was true that ships navigated up and down the Thames requiring greater depths than those mentioned, they were in consequence confined in their course to channels of less width than those recommended by the Conservancy with resulting danger and delay, and that it was more instructive in view of the real requirements of safe navigation to adopt these widths of channel than to state the greater depths to be found in a narrow, and, in places, tortuous channel. Then it was to be remembered that in considering the draught of water of a ship which could use the channels allowance must be made for at least two feet of water under the keel in the case of large vessels.

In the chapter on the volume and character of the trade of the Port, the Commissioners say that the Port of London was still as it had been for at least 200 years, the greatest in the world in respect of the amount of shipping and goods which entered it. Statistics showed a constant growth in the volume of the trade, although the rate of increase had not been so rapid in the more recent years as it was in some former times. After furnishing figures supporting this statement and further figures of tonnage relating to home

and foreign ports, the Commissioners, in paragraph 18 of their report, come to conclusions which disposed of the accusation against the dock companies that their inadequate arrangements and high charges had driven away trade to the outports or foreign ports. The paragraph is quoted in full :—

The obvious indication of these figures is that in recent years the percentage of increase has been much greater at a port like Southampton and at certain Continental ports such as Hamburg, Rotterdam, and Antwerp than it has been at older ports such as London, Liverpool, and Hull in this country, or at Havre, Marseilles, and Genoa on the Continent, all of which were more conspicuous at an early date than the ports which have lately been developing so rapidly. The explanation would appear to be that to some extent the ports in question are calling ports, especially ports like Southampton, Rotterdam, and Antwerp, and that their business as a whole does not properly enter into comparison with that of a port which is chiefly one of ultimate destination like London and Liverpool. We are unable to conclude, therefore, that the figures show any relative decline of London compared with the other ports named, allowing for the difference in the nature of the business done. This view is further strengthened when we allow for such obvious explanations as the larger percentage of the increase in a case when the initial figure is small than in a case when it is large, although the amount of the increase is the same in both, and for the fact that a large part of the trade of Hamburg, Rotterdam, and Antwerp is with the ports of the United Kingdom, and even with London. What the future development will be it is not easy to foresee. Southampton, Hamburg, Rotterdam, and Antwerp have all gained largely in the shipping returns in recent years by the establishment of lines of steamers, many of these with subsidies, just as London and older ports gained at an earlier date, but there is nothing to indicate that the older ports are being superseded or prevented from largely increasing. The development of Hamburg in particular, it should be added, cannot be unconnected with the increasing dependence of Germany, as its population increases, on supplies of food and raw material imported from abroad, and especially from oversea, Hamburg being the chief inlet of the whole empire.

Discussing the position of the entrepôt trade, the Commissioners called attention to the statistics which indicated that whilst for the past twenty years this business had not absolutely declined, yet it certainly had not advanced in proportion to the general development of the trade and shipping of the Kingdom. The Commissioners in this connexion pointed out that the English carrying trade grew up protected by the navigation laws against the competition

of old maritime nations like the Dutch and secured a practical monopoly as against other European countries during the long wars at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Hence it was placed in and long maintained a position of almost unnatural superiority. It was to be expected that other European nations should in time develop their own mercantile marine and secure for their shipping, part of their own import and export trade. No doubt also the growth of direct trade so far as regards the south of Europe had been accelerated by the substitution of the Mediterranean for the Cape route to the East. Against causes of this general character, improvements in the Port of London would not have much effect, but the Commissioners realized that if the Port became less convenient or more expensive for the reception of large shipping than neighbouring rival ports, then London was not only in danger of losing anything which remained of the re-export trade to Germany, Holland and Belgium, but also that part of the general re-export trade may pass to their ports. It was also highly probable that large ships, if time and money could be saved by doing so, would discharge at Rotterdam and Antwerp goods intended for England and Scotland, which would then be conveyed to their destinations by Channel and North Sea steamers, and even goods destined for the London market itself might easily be transhipped at Rotterdam or Antwerp instead of at Tilbury or the Albert Dock and brought by small Channel steamers and run straight up to wharves on the Thames. The contingency feared in the last-named possibility was hardly a practical one in any event, for on the worst hypothesis for the conditions in London, it could never be an economical proposition to give up the direct route, but no one could question that the committee were justified in saying that all the considerations of the case pointed to the advantage of adapting the Thames in every way to the requirements of modern ocean-going ships.

The committee then proceed to review questions connected with the authorities then exercising control in the ports.

They reported that these were :

1. The Thames Conservancy, whose duties included the government and regulation of all vessels within the port, the

improvement and completion of the navigation of the river, the appointment of harbour masters, the removal of obstructions in the river, the maintenance of navigation by dredging, the licensing of docks, piers and embankments and other erections, the placing and maintenance of moorings and navigation beacons, the construction of piers and landing-places, and the carrying out of the Explosives and Petroleum Acts so far as they affect the river.

2. The Trinity House, charged with questions relating to pilotage, buoying, and lighting.

3. The Watermen's Company, who licensed lightermen and watermen.

4. The Corporation of London, who were the Sanitary Authority of the Port.

5. The Police Authority, who were the Metropolitan Police in areas within their jurisdiction and in the lower river the police of the counties of Essex and Kent.

As regards the Thames Conservancy, the Commissioners reported the reasons already referred to, given by the Conservancy, for not applying to Parliament for further powers for the purpose of carrying out the programme of the Lower Thames Navigation Commission. Their inaction appeared to the Commission to have been, on the part of a public body charged with vital interests, evidence of an inadequate view of their duties. The argument of the chairman of the Conservancy, Sir F. Dixon Hartland, that the smallness of the dock entrances would have made the cost of any deepening of the river useless, was treated by the Commission as less of a reason than of an excuse for the Conservancy not having taken in hand the improvements of the river. It was obvious that the dock companies could gain no advantage in deepening the entrances of their docks if with the river in its present condition vessels could only approach the docks at or near the time of high water, and at this time of tide the locks, although perhaps susceptible of some improvement, were not conspicuously inferior in depth to that of the channel of the river at such times. But further, Sir F. Dixon Hartland's argument altogether ignored the well-known difficulties of navigating the Thames with ships of large draught if delayed by fog or other causes. In this connexion the Commission said they had received a considerable amount of evidence to the effect that it was no uncommon thing for large vessels ascending the river to be obliged to return to Gravesend if they found it impossible to reach the docks sufficiently near the time of



A VIEW OF LONDON BRIDGE AND CUSTOM HOUSE WITH THE MARGATE STEAM YACHTS
From an engraving by R. Havell & Son

high water to be certain of entering the docks as most of the intervening reaches were too shallow to permit them to anchor. The Commission, impressed by the almost complete concurrence of opinion that considerable river works were necessary, had no hesitation in stating that it was highly important to the trade of London that a channel of not less than 30 feet in depth at low water of spring tides should be made from the Nore to the entrance of the Royal Albert Dock, and that the width to be adopted for this channel should be as proposed by the Conservancy, 1,000 feet as far as Crayfordness, and from Crayfordness to the Royal Albert Dock, 600 feet. They further thought above the Royal Albert Dock the river should be deepened and improved as far as the old Thames Tunnel, now used by the East London Railway. It was probable that the depth of 30 feet might be attained as high up as the Greenland Dock and 25 or 26 feet up to the Shadwell entrance of the London Dock, but the Commission made no definite recommendation in regard to the depth of the upper river. As vessels of large draught now suffered much risk and inconvenience for want of deep places in which to take refuge if delayed on passage up and down the river, the Commission recommended that, as a first part of the dredging programme, holes or basins should be dredged to the depth of 30 feet (which basins would afterwards form part of the continuous channel) in six different places between the Shadwell entrance to the London Dock and the entrance to the Royal Albert Dock, with four additional basins at approximately equal distances between the Royal Albert Dock and Northfleet Hope. The history of the Thames seemed to show that there was little risk of the suggested basins silting up in the interval of their being made and the continuous channel being formed, and the Commission thought that when these works were accomplished the river would bear the same relation to the dimensions of the largest modern ships as it bore fifty years before to those of the largest ships then existing.

The Commission then recapitulated the evidence of the Trinity House and of the views of the shipowners on the question. They further discussed the question whether pilotage should be compulsory and whether if so, ships subject to compulsory pilotage should be exempt from

liability for damages, pointing out that modern policy was opposed to compulsory pilotage as indicated by the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894, which provides that there shall be no compulsory pilotage and no restriction on the power of duly qualified persons to obtain licences in in any new pilotage districts, and that pilotage was free in many ports, for example, the Tees and the Tyne, Swansea, Cardiff, Leith, Dundee and Cork. The Commissioners thought that if a new authority were formed in the Port, the power of licensing pilots within the Port should be transferred to them, but on the larger question of compulsory pilotage they thought it outside the scope of their reference to make any recommendation as to the connexion between compulsory pilotage and the immunity of a shipowner for damage which concerned general law.

Though the Commission had no criticism to pass upon the manner in which the Watermen's Company had performed their duties, they recommended that all the powers of the Company should be transferred to any new authority appointed to control the Port. While thinking that in the interests of public safety, watermen employed in passenger traffic, including river steamboats, should be licensed for employment by such new authority, they agreed with the Thames Traffic Committee of 1879 in not thinking it necessary that men employed in the navigation of non-passenger carrying lighters should have any licence or be subject to any examination. Employers should in this class of craft be left free to employ any men whom they choose subject to the fullest responsibility for the acts of those they employ. The Commissioners accepted the view put forward by several witnesses that the existing artificial restrictions had placed the river traffic too much under the control of a limited class of men and had, perhaps, by removing the stimulus of open competition, encouraged among them habits which the paternal and well meant care of the Court of Watermen was not always sufficient to correct. If the Commissioners' proposals for the new authority (given later) were carried out, all lighters would be annually licensed by the authority, and this process would give the authority a control over river craft and, before renewing licences, to take into consideration any complaints as to the trustworthiness of the lightermen.

The transference of powers and loss of fees would materially affect the Watermen's Company. They would cease to have any functions except those of administering certain charities, and little revenue apart from that derived from endowments which were affected by charitable trusts. The Commission recommended that compensation to the officials of the Company should be provided by the new Port Authority, and that the Charity Commissioners should be asked to make a scheme for the future regulation of the charities.

The Commissioners had no remarks to make on the sanitary or police controls of the Port beyond saying that they did not recommend any change in the authorities administering them.

The description of the three systems of docks given by the Commissioners is a careful historical narrative of events which were consummated by their appointment to investigate the Port of London question. The reader is already in possession of the circumstances described at greater length in the preceding pages and no quotation or summary of the Commissioners' report is therefore necessary. They allude to the Regents Canal Dock, and to minor docks or wharves belonging to various railway companies, viz., Brentford Dock, Chelsea Dock, Deptford Dock and the two Docks at Poplar. The Commissioners considered that the Limehouse Dock of the Regents Canal Company was merely the mouth of the canal, and that the other docks mentioned fell into a category different from that of the large public docks and might be regarded as riverside terminal stations. The Commissioners therefore omitted them from their proposals.

With the assistance of Mr. R. C. H. Davison, the engineer employed by them, the Commissioners had endeavoured to arrive at an estimate of the total cost of bringing into a good state of repair the properties belonging to the three companies, of effecting such improvements as would be requisite in order to bring the docks of those companies to a degree of efficiency which would meet the needs of the Port, assuming that the river channels were deepened and enlarged in the way recommended, and of making the proposed extension near the Royal Albert Dock. In the opinion of the Commissioners the cost could not be safely

estimated at less than £4,500,000, and they thought that an expenditure of this amount, apart from any later extension at Tilbury or elsewhere, would have to be made in the next few years if the Port was to be restored to its proper position. These works should proceed concurrently with the deepening of the river.

The Commissioners at great length discussed the grievance put forward by all the companies in regard to the exemption of lighters from dues and the statutory right of lighters to enter and leave the docks without any payment in respect of the goods which they carry, and the allegation of the companies that the cause of their deficient financial vitality was the drain upon profits which should legitimately come to them, by rivals which had grown under favouring circumstances from a position of toleration on account of insignificance into one of superior participation in the general profits of the trade. The Commissioners' comment on this is that although the misfortunes of some of the companies may to some extent be due, as some adverse witnesses alleged, to rash and premature expenditure of capital and to errors in administration, yet they thought that to a considerable extent the explanation of the companies was a true one. They were, in the opinion of the Commissioners, the victims of a change of circumstances which had dispossessed them gradually of the advantages which they once enjoyed. They had rendered great services for a hundred years to the Port of London and were entitled to much sympathy, but when they asked, as they did, for power to tax their rivals in trade in order to restore a lost position serious difficulties and objections arose. The judgment of the Commission on this question is understandable, as it was in accordance with the inexorable convention of the attitude of Parliament when it is a question of justice to investors. It is always the victim who is to continue to suffer. The vested interest which has thriven on the victim is allowed a continuance of its prosperity. But this was not the common case of speculation having turned out to be unremunerative through the progress of invention or vagaries in fashion. Here were works of the highest public utility which the state or the municipality had been unwilling to provide at their own cost, and in consequence the capital had been found by private persons. The Port had flourished

because of these works and their extension from time to time. For many years investors of every kind put their savings in docks, and at one time dock stocks took rank in London not far below Bank of England stock. No stock was more sought after by trustees. True, there was the privilege of drawing water from the Thames and a certain amount of monopoly, subsequently more and more diluted by the unrestricted competition so prized by the Parliamentary Committee which reported in 1824. But if it had privileges it also had obligations imposed on them to keep docks open to all comers whether they brought remunerative business or not. When in 1855 the directors began to realize how the changes which the State had made in its fiscal policy, affecting imports of foreign produce, were likely to undermine the foundations upon which dock solvency was built and applied to Parliament for powers to make charges on lighters, they were told they could not have the powers because their financial condition indicated no need of them. When by 1899 financial collapse, foreseen in 1855, was almost imminent, the directors were told by the Commission appointed by Parliament that great sympathy was felt for them, but that the "tree must lie where it is fallen," and the public could use the timber for its own purposes. It is not as if the dock companies were bent on asking for a restoration of their fortunes when 10 per cent. dividends were paid. As has been shown, Mr. Cater Scott was prepared to pledge to make a modern dock and to concede reductions of dues to shipowners. For a long time after opening, the new dock would not have earned its working expenses, and any profit subsequently was limited by the proviso that the ordinary dividend was never to have exceeded 4 per cent. The levity displayed by men believed to be serious and weighty in affairs in thus viewing the claims of investors of £20,000,000, in enterprises indispensable alike to the operations of the greatest commercial centre in the world and to the feeding and maintenance of the capital city of the British Empire, has scarcely been exceeded by the exponents of the sternest cults of Socialism. The comment of Sir Henry Le Marchant in a contemporary article that "No greater discouragement could be found to the employment of capital in new industrial enterprises than the conviction in the mind of the public from past experience,

that, if a project be unsuccessful it will be left on the hands of the promoters, and if the contrary, the fruits may be reaped at any moment by the State on its own terms," was abundantly justified. Even a Royal Commission report has its humorous aspects. Its tears of sympathy were accompanied by a rebuke to the London and India Docks for having, while the committee was sitting, increased its shipping dues from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per ton, thereby at once increasing its annual income by £100,000, and the Commissioners commented on the fact by saying that the "step had been taken in opposition to an important expression of opinion by shipowners against any increase in dues of shipping." So that according to the Commissioners' reasoning, whilst it was wrong to remove by legislation an admitted grievance due to out of date statutes, it was equally wrong for the dock companies to avail themselves of the same statutes in order to redress those grievances by methods not ideal but legal. In other words, the "victim," not being allowed to have the weapons he would prefer to have, is to be deprived of those he happens to possess. Apart, however, from these considerations, it should be pointed out that before the Royal Commission was appointed, the dock company had given the clearest public intimation that failing the remedy they sought, they would exercise the powers at their disposal by increasing the shipping dues.

Having disposed of the case of the dock companies, the Commissioners set out the proposals for unified control made by the various interests represented before them, and then without criticizing the proposals, promptly dismissed them all from serious consideration by saying that none of them were brought forward in a completely workable form. Those who had framed them regarded the matter from special and divers points of view, and did not possess the full information which had been elicited by the inquiry, and while, therefore, the Commissioners found the various schemes useful in assisting them in reaching their own conclusions as to the best course to be adopted, they had not been able to recommend the adoption of any one of them as it stood.

The Commission then proceeded to give their reasons for their own decision to recommend the creation of a Port Authority on the Thames. It had been proved in their

opinion that the Port of London was in danger of losing part of its existing trade, and certainly part of the trade which might otherwise come to it by reason of the river channels and docks being inadequate to meet the demands of modern commerce, and they had found that there was great difficulty in improving the Port in consequence of the division of powers amongst different authorities, and in so far as the chief dock company was concerned, by reason of its financial position.

The Thames Conservancy did not possess sufficient revenue from existing sources to enable them to fulfil their obvious duty, and they had not attempted to procure the necessary powers, although the need had continuously been pressed upon them. Moreover, the constitution of this body was not such that the Commissioners could advise its being endowed with the power of raising capital for the works they felt it their duty to recommend. The Trinity House was entrusted with the buoying and lighting of channels in respect of which the Conservancy had the duties of formation and maintenance. The exclusive right of navigating lighters was in the possession of an ancient labour guild, whose monopoly had been a cause of widespread complaint. It had, in the judgment of the Commissioners, been proved by the evidence that this distribution of power between distinct authorities was contrary to the interests of the Port as a whole.

The Commissioners considered that the docks were as essential to the working of the Port as the river itself. Even if the dock companies were in a position to raise the sums and to carry out the works required, yet the inter-dependence of the proposals for improving the river and of those for improving the docks and the peculiar conditions under which the trade of the Port was carried on, rendered it highly desirable that these two closely connected elements of the Port should be no longer controlled by independent authorities.

The attention of the Commissioners had been directed to the public character and success of the port authorities existing in the chief maritime cities of the United Kingdom, and also to the public administration of foreign ports which had in recent years become formidable rivals to London in the competition for the shipping trade, and especially

for the large ocean steamers. It had been shown that there existed amongst shipowners, merchants and representative bodies a powerful consensus of opinion in favour of the consolidation of powers at present divided, and the creation of a single public Authority for the control and improvement of the Port. In these circumstances the Commissioners strongly recommended that such an authority should be constituted.

The proposals of the Commissioners may be shortly summarized as follows :—

All the powers and property of the Thames Conservancy in connexion with the river below Teddington to be vested in the Authority. The powers of the Trinity House, so far as they relate to the area of the Port of London, as defined by the constituting Act, also to be transferred to the Authority. All the powers of the Watermen's Company connected with the licensing and control of watermen and lightermen and the regulations of lighters and other craft also to be transferred to the new Authority. All the powers and property of the London and India, Surrey Commercial and Millwall Companies to be vested in the Authority, the actual transfer of the docks to be completed by a date as early as possible to be fixed by the Act.

The Commissioners said they had considered whether it would be possible to transfer to the new Authority the lower docks only, leaving the London and India Company in possession of their older docks and not taking over the properties of the Surrey and Millwall Companies. If this course were followed the competition between a public Authority controlling the river and the river works of improvement and supported by a large revenue would be unfair to those companies whose property was unpurchased or only purchased in part. This passing tenderness for the dock company's shareholders is noteworthy, but the possibilities of such competition, though subsequently brandished before the companies by some of the interests who desired to purchase the docks cheaply, caused no alarm to the directors. It is certain that any struggle would have left the new Port Authority with the worst of the battle and a diminished prestige. But the Commissioners were absolutely right in their conclusion that such a division of the docks would have been disadvantageous to the Port as a whole. The



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Commissioners acknowledged that the combination of dock with warehousing business had rendered their problem more perplexing. If the warehouses were administered by the Authority, they had to face the objection that an Authority controlling the improvements and regulating the traffic of the river, supported by revenue obtained from dues on shipping and goods, and in possession of the quays and waters of all the docks and possibly assisted by guarantees from the rates of London would, in its warehousing business, compete at an advantage against the public and private wharfinger and warehouse owners who had invested so much capital in their properties. It will be perceived that the Commissioners realized that they had not got rid of the question of hardship on vested interests by refusing to grant new powers to the dock companies. They saw that they would only be intensifying it by giving these powers to a public authority subsidized by the public rates in competition with the many private wharves and warehouses on the river side. They turned therefore to the suggestion that the new Authority should acquire the properties of the wharfingers as well as those of the docks, but hesitated to take this plunge. They relied upon the argument that the reasons for entrusting the Authority with the control of the river and docks did not apply with the same force to the case of the warehouses, as the requirements of the Port in this respect appeared to have been fully met by private enterprise. Nor could the Commissioners solve the problem by accepting the proposal that the new Authority should take over the dock quays and waters without the warehouses. Besides the fact already alluded to that many of the warehouses were more or less in juxtaposition with the quays, there was the fact that commercially the warehousing had been closely united with the dock business, and also that it would be contrary to the general law that the Authority should take over by compulsory purchase the quays and leave the warehouses in the hands of the companies. The Commissioners were therefore brought to the conclusion that it would be necessary for the Authority to purchase the whole of the company's undertakings. In view, however, of the peculiar circumstances of the Port and of the division of trade between the docks and the riverside traders, they thought that it would be inexpedient that the new Authority

should carry on permanently the business of warehousing, and were of opinion therefore that the Authority, after taking over the warehouses, should sell or lease such of them as would not be usefully employed in the enlargement of the quays or transit sheds ; that in order to secure this object the constituting Act should provide that within a definite period the warehouses should be offered for sale or lease : and that in the meantime, the Authority should carry on the warehousing business, but that if it should prove impossible to dispose of the premises without great loss then the Authority should permanently retain such warehouses. As it would never be possible to obtain rents or sale values from wharfingers which would compensate the Authority for the loss of business entailed, the remedy of the Commissioners was an impracticable one, and in effect would have left the wharfingers to the mercy of a rate aided Authority. When the report was translated into a Bill, and the various parties appeared before Parliament, it was the opposition of the wharfingers to this part of the scheme which gave the deathblow to the Bill.

The limits of the Port proposed by the Commissioners were from Teddington Lock, as being the present tidal limit, to a line drawn from Havengore Creek in Essex, to Warden Point in the Isle of Sheppey in Kent. The line in question was about two nautical miles further east than the existing frontier of the Conservancy for dredging purposes, and corresponded with the actual eastward limit of the Customs Port, and with that of the Conservancy for collecting dues. The southward limit proposed excluded the Medway from the jurisdiction of the Port.

On the most important question of finance, the Commissioners considered first the mode in which the docks should be purchased, and secondly the capital expenditure for improvements and the method of raising it.

In regard to the purchase of the docks, the Commissioners pointed out that the usual method of acquiring large undertakings by a public authority had been to fix by arbitration the value of such undertakings, and then to raise loans in the market and to pay the whole value in cash. In the case of the docks, without expressing an opinion adversely to the alternative of raising a loan, the Commissioners recommended as a probably more convenient and economical

method (*a*) that the docks be vested in the Authority subject to any liabilities with respect to debenture stock and mortgages and other debts and obligations, (*b*) that the Authority be empowered to create up to a certain limit Port stock to be guaranteed in certain proportions by the City Corporation and the London County Council, (*c*) that the authority issue to each company in consideration for the undertaking so transferred such an amount of stock as might be agreed upon, or in default of agreement as might be determined by a Court of Arbitration, (*d*) that the stock so issued to each company should be distributed amongst the dock stockholders as might be determined by arbitration.

With regard to the principles which should guide the arbitrators, the Commissioners thought that the pecuniary position of the dock proprietors should be rendered neither better nor worse, due consideration being had to all the circumstances of the case; in other words, they should be merely indemnified. Indemnity was the principle which governed the purchase clause of the Lands Clauses Act. This somewhat obvious definition of justice to the owners of property was the prelude to the suggestion that the ordinary procedure under the Lands Clauses Acts should be modified to the detriment of the proprietors, the proposal being that the machinery of the Act should be simplified by omitting the two arbitrators appointed under the Acts and having only one umpire with power to delegate the detailed valuations of some of the items of sale, and further that what was called the conventional allowance of 10 per cent. for forced sale always awarded in arbitrations under the Lands Clauses Act should not be added. The Commissioners justified their special treatment of dock shareholders by the argument that their position would be affected nominally rather than substantially by the substitution of a Public Trust for a limited company. The most they were prepared to allow for the inconvenience, delay and cost of the dispossession of stockholders, many of whom preferred directorial management to that of newcomers utterly unknown to them and not controllable by them, was that the Court of Arbitration should be empowered to make such compensation for the inconvenience as might appear to them to be just. One set-off appears

to have been in the minds of the Commissioners in their suggestion that Port stock might be properly included among the securities in which a trustee might invest under the powers of the Trustee Act, but doubtless any superior value the stock might derive by this distinction would have been taken into account in the umpire's award.

Estimating the capital sums to be expended within the next ten years upon the river at £2,500,000, and on the docks at £4,500,000, the Commissioners proceeded to consider the resources available for meeting the expenditure, and they came to the conclusion that all the revenue from existing sources would be fully engaged to maintain the undertakings and pay the interest on Port stock created to purchase them, together with payments to a sinking fund to be established ten years from the date the Authority came into being. The Commissioners said it was clear that the provision of an adequate revenue for the Authority implied some increase in the charge upon the trade of the Port, nor did they find any hesitation on the part of those most competent to form a judgment in recognizing that this must be the case. They entirely concurred, however, with the view that, having regard to the existing and increasing competition of other Ports, such additional charge should be confined to the provision of such improvements as were strictly necessary and might be expected to be productive. In these circumstances they had considered whether some portion of the £7,000,000 should not be provided otherwise than by the Port Authority. There appeared no reason for placing any charge on the National Exchequer, but seeing that the Thames must always be a great and vital highway of commerce to the many millions dwelling near its banks, and that within comparatively recent times the maintenance and improvement of the lower Thames was a duty and charge incumbent on the Corporation as the only municipal authority, the Commissioners suggested that the expenditure of £2,500,000 on the river should be borne by the Corporation and County Council between them in proportions to be agreed, and they were encouraged to make the suggestion by the strong and practical anxiety they had shown for the improvement and welfare of London. This contribution was to be accompanied by the guarantee already referred to of the interest on Port stock. This guarantee

would enable the transfer of the dock properties to take place under advantageous conditions, and would enable the capital necessary for the improvement of the docks and river to be raised upon favourable terms.

The Commissioners, seeking for other sources of revenue, did not advise any increase of the river tonnage dues on shipping. These were low as compared with other British Ports, but since the Port of London, on account of its difficulty of approach at some seasons, its cost and quality of labour, and some other circumstances was already a dear Port for a large class of ships, it would be inexpedient seriously, if at all, to increase the river dues. Dealing with dock dues on shipping, the Commissioners mentioned that at the London and India Docks the maximum chargeable was 1s. 6d. per ton. At the Surrey system 1s., whilst at the Millwall Docks there was no statutory maximum. Though the Commissioners had been so shocked by the London and India Company having raised their current dues to 1s. 6d., they not only urged the maintenance of 1s. 6d. at that system, but that it should be made universal, contenting themselves with the expression of the hope that a rate of 1s. per ton might be found to be sufficient.

The Commissioners found themselves unable to recommend that any source of income for the new authority should be provided by the repeal of the free water clauses in the Dock Acts. Under the new government of the Port it would, however, be fair and advantageous also from reasons connected with the regulation of the traffic that the Authority should have power to levy a licensing fee upon all barges using the Port. Barges had grown considerably both in size and in the part which they had taken in the traffic of the Port, and it appeared reasonable that they should contribute to the revenue of the Port and a not inconsiderable sum could be thereby provided.

The main source of the additional revenue which would be required by the Authority was in the opinion of the Commission to be found in dues upon goods landed in the Port. In this, the Port of London would be following the precedent set at Liverpool, Glasgow, Newcastle, Bristol, and most of the leading ports of the United Kingdom. If dues were heavy their objects might be defeated, since goods might be diverted and come to London through other ports

and railways, but the Commissioners apprehended that the distribution of so comparatively small a sum over such a mass of goods would not have this result. The Commissioners did not favour dues upon export goods, nor goods which entered the Port for transshipment or re-exportation. The Commissioners did not desire to exclude the consideration of any other mode of raising revenue should it be found essential to the financial position of the Authority, and, subject to due safeguards, the new body ought to have some general powers for such a purpose.

The Commissioners said they had given careful consideration to the constitution of the Authority, having regard to the distinguishing features of London and especially to the multiplicity of the interests involved. Their opinion was that the Authority should consist of nominated and elected members, the nominated members being chosen partly by national and partly by municipal authorities, and should include persons belonging to the mercantile community. In departing somewhat in this suggestion from the precedents of other great British ports, they had kept before them the fact that London differed from them in its enormous population and the magnitude of each class of the interests affected. In Liverpool a distinguished merchant or shipowner was known throughout the whole community. In London such a man was often neither a member of the London County Council nor of the Corporation, and in the vast aggregate of individuals gathered there, his capacity was known only among a section and he might therefore be unwilling to submit himself to election. If the obstacle of election be removed, the interests of the commercial world would, they thought, be sufficient to secure the co-operation of men of high business capacity in the service of this most difficult work of administration. The elected members should, in the opinion of the Commission, be elected by different groups of traders interested in the Port acting as separate constituencies, so that no important interest would run the risk of being altogether excluded from representation. Having these views in mind, the suggested constitution put forward by the Commissioners on the assumption that the Corporation and County Council would accept

the financial responsibilities indicated was as follows :—

The nominated members to be appointed by the

| | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----------|
| London County Council | .. | .. | .. | .. | 11 |
| City Corporation | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3 |
| Admiralty | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 |
| Board of Trade | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 |
| Trinity House | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 |
| Kent County Council | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 |
| Essex County Council | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 |
| London Chamber of Commerce | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 |
| Bank of England, from among persons belonging to the mercantile community | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5 |
| | | | | | <hr/> 26 |

The elected members to be elected by

| | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----------|
| Ocean Trading Shipowners | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5 |
| Short Sea Trading Shipowners | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 |
| Wharfingers | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3 |
| Owners of lighters and river craft, including passenger steamers | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 |
| Railway Companies | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 |
| | | | | | <hr/> 14 |

The Commissioners said it was obvious that the figures would have to be altered materially if the two municipal authorities should abstain from accepting the responsibility of the suggested contribution and guarantee. As a rule the members of the Trust should be unpaid, but it might, perhaps, be desirable to pay a small salary to the members nominated by the Government, and possibly it might be advantageous to attach a more considerable authority to the posts of chairman and vice-chairman. The Authority would naturally appoint standing committees for the transaction of various departments of its business, but the Commissioners thought that provision should be made in the constituting Act for a statutory committee for the management of the docks and works of dock improvement, such committee to have power to co-opt a limited number of expert persons from the outside.

The constitution of the new Authority would render it necessary to reconstitute the Thames Conservancy as a body for the control of the river above Teddington, but the Commissioners did not consider it within the scope of their

reference to suggest the composition of the new body. In view however, of the importance to the channels of the lower river to maintain a sufficient flow of water over Teddington weir, they considered that the Port Authority should have the right of nominating one or two members of the new Conservancy Board.

With regard to the Custom House arrangements, the Commissioners did not feel that the evidence before them was sufficient to enable them to offer usefully an opinion upon the matter, and they left it to the Treasury to deal with the complaints which had been mentioned.

The concluding paragraph of the report is quoted :—

In conclusion, we desire to say that our inquiry into the conditions of the Port of London has convinced us of its splendid natural advantages. Amongst these are the geographical position of the Port ; the magnitude, wealth, and energy of the population behind it ; the fine approach from the sea ; the river tides strong enough to transport traffic easily to all parts, yet not so violent as to make navigation difficult ; land along the shores of a character suitable for dock construction and all commercial purposes. In addition to these advantages, London possesses docks which, though they are not in some cases upon the level of modern requirements, are yet capacious and capable of further development. The deficiencies of London as a port, to which our attention has been called, are not due to any physical circumstances, but to causes which may easily be removed by a better organization of administrative and financial powers. The great increase in the size and draught of ocean-going ships has made extensive works necessary both in the river and in the docks, but the dispersion of powers among several authorities and companies has prevented any systematic execution of adequate improvements. Hence the Port has for a time failed to keep pace with the developments of modern population and commerce, and has shown signs of losing that position relatively to other ports, British and foreign, which it has held for so long. The shortcomings of the past cannot be remedied without considerable outlay. We are, however, convinced that if in this great national concern, energy and courage be shown there is no reason to fear that the welfare of the Port of London will be permanently impaired.



CUNARD SS. "CARONIA" ENTERING THE LOCK AT TILBURY DOCK

CHAPTER XXIX

London & India Docks Company

THE amalgamation of the London and St. Katharine and East and West India Docks Company had been facilitated by the scheme of arrangement with its creditors, which the latter company had succeeded in obtaining in the early part of 1898. The chief feature of this scheme was that the proportion of borrowed capital to share capital had been brought down to a level more in accordance with the rule of financial prudence. In merging the capitals of the two companies it was therefore found possible to amalgamate the greater part of the debenture debt of the India Company with that of the London Company, but most of the stock was obviously not so well secured, and a portion of it had, therefore, to be dealt with by an unusual arrangement. The new securities created by the Amalgamation Act were as follows :—

“A” 3 per cent. Debenture Stock
“B” 3 per cent. Debenture Stock
“C” 3 per cent. Debenture Stock
“A” 4 per cent. Preference Stock
“B” 4 per cent. Preference Stock
4 per cent. Preferred Ordinary Stock
Deferred Ordinary Stock

The priority of the stocks was to be in the order shown above, with the exception that the “C” Debenture Stock was subject to a condition to be mentioned hereafter.

The “B” preference stock and the preferred ordinary stocks were to be entitled to participate equally with the deferred stock in any dividends paid after the deferred stock had received 4 per cent.

The London Company’s 4 per cent. debenture stock holders were to receive 61 per cent. of their holdings in “A” debenture stock, and $72\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. in “B” debenture stock.

The London Company’s $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. preferential stock holders were to receive £112 10s. of “A” preference stock.

The London Company’s proprietors were to receive 25 per cent. of their holdings in “B” preference stock,

33 per cent. in preferred ordinary stock, and 42 per cent. in deferred ordinary stock.

The India Company's prior lien debenture holders were to receive an equal amount of "A" debenture stock.

The India Company's consolidated debenture stock holders were to receive $36\frac{2}{3}$ of "B" debenture stock and $63\frac{1}{3}$ of "C" debenture stock. The special character of the "C" debenture stock was that though as regards capital priority it ranked after the "B" debenture stock, the interest ranked with the dividends payable on the "A" and "B" preference stocks, and if there was a deficiency it was carried forward as a debt to be paid off when the income allowed it. It will be seen that for all practical purposes the "C" debenture stock was a cumulative preference stock.

The India Company's preference stock holders were to receive an equal amount of preferred ordinary stock.

The ordinary stock holders of the India Company were to receive an equal amount of deferred ordinary stock.

The above arrangements were complicated, but there was a desire that the position of each class of holders in the old companies should be mathematically reproduced in the new company, and the creation of these stocks with their special privileges and restrictions carried out this intention. As matters turned out the restrictions were never exercised and the privileges were never enjoyed.

The unexercised powers of the old companies for borrowing or for raising fresh capital were carried forward for the benefit of the new company, and they were to be available for repaying the terminable mortgage debts of the two companies. Additional powers to borrow £450,000 working capital in place of the £300,000 working capital of the Joint Committee were conferred on the Company.

The number of directors was fixed at not less than seventeen or more than twenty-seven. The new board was to consist of the members of the Joint Committee on the 1st January, 1901, the date upon which the amalgamation commenced, but at the summer half-yearly meeting of 1902 the whole of the board was to retire and a fresh one to be elected. When this took place the number of the board was fixed at twenty-one, two of the outside members from each board being added to the seventeen Joint Committee members to make up the number.

The rest of the Amalgamation Act was mere machinery. All the old administrative powers of the two companies, varying at each dock, were carried over to the new company. Had the Royal Commission not been sitting at the time, the occasion would have been taken to consolidate those powers either in the Amalgamation Act or by a Bill in the session of 1902, but it was obviously waste of time to make the attempt when all the circumstances pointed to impending constitutional changes throughout the Port.

After the amalgamation had been completed, the capital of the Company was ascertained to be as follows :—

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----|----|-------------|
| "A" Debenture Stock | .. | .. | £2,550,291 |
| "B" Debenture Stock | .. | .. | 3,259,254 |
| "C" Debenture Stock | .. | .. | 1,843,266 |
| "A" Preference Stock | .. | .. | 1,937,070 |
| "B" Preference Stock | .. | .. | 1,438,723 |
| Preferred Ordinary Stock | .. | .. | 2,866,548 |
| Deferred Ordinary Stock | .. | .. | 4,802,855 |
| Mortgages | .. | .. | 395,075 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | | £19,093,082 |

The unexercised capital powers on the 30th June, 1901, were £299,963 by ordinary or preference stocks, and £811,534 loan capital.

The first directors of the Company were :—

CHARLES JAMES CATER SCOTT, Chairman
THE HON. SYDNEY HOLLAND, Deputy Chairman
SYDNEY EGGERS BATES
EDWARD BOYLE, K.C.
SIR GEORGE HENRY CHAMBERS
THOMAS DU BUISSON
COLONEL JOHN LOWTHER DU PLAT TAYLOR, C.B.
JOHN JAMES HAMILTON
RODOLPH ALEXANDER HANKEY
WILLIAM EGERTON HUBBARD
WILLIAM LE LACHEUR
SIR HENRY DENIS LE MARCHANT, Bart.
SIR NEVILE LUBBOCK, K.C.M.G.
COLONEL BEN HAY MARTINDALE, C.B.
EDWARD SAMUEL NORRIS
FRED POOK
MARLBOROUGH ROBERT PRYOR
ROBERT BRUCE RONALD
SETH TAYLOR
JOHN HENRY TOD
EDWARD WAGG

Mr. H. W. Williams, the manager of the Joint Committee, and Mr. Henry Morgan, who had been its secretary, retired on the inauguration of the amalgamated Company. Mr. Thomas Hardy and Mr. Francis Greenway were appointed joint managers, and Mr. J. G. Broodbank, the secretary of the Company.

With the disappearance of the Joint Committee all the causes which led to friction were removed. The union became a complete one, the method of division of profits no longer tended to make one section of the board reactionary and the other anxious for experiments, yet it placed everyone in no worse position than they had been when the companies were separate. The great guarantee for undivided management was the fact that both boards were now responsible to the same body of proprietors.

The effect of the new state of affairs was at once made evident by two important steps taken by the board. The first was the application to Parliament for powers to build a new dock to the south of the Royal Albert Dock. The shipowners whose vessels were accustomed to use the Royal Albert Dock had been pressing for a long time for a new dock in this neighbourhood. The vessels which could be accommodated at the Royal Albert Dock were limited to 500 feet in length, and no vessel over 12,000 tons could use the dock. The directors desired to accede to the request, and accordingly promoted a Bill for the purpose. The proposed dock was in its broad outline designed on the plan subsequently adopted by the Port Authority in the construction of their South Albert Dock. The second step was to raise the dues on shipping by 50 per cent., the effect of which was to increase the net income by about £100,000, and thereby increasing the dividend on the deferred ordinary stock by about 2 per cent. As stated in another place the Royal Commission criticized the board for taking this course while they were considering the question of the Port. They no doubt suspected that it was done with a view to enhancing the value of the undertaking in case it was purchased, but the answer already given was that when they were promoting the Bill for dues on barges, the board definitely stated that if they failed to obtain the remedy they sought they should have recourse to their unexercised powers of charging dock dues, and that they saw no reason for

waiting during the indefinite time that might elapse before any recommendation of the Committee might be carried out. The additional income secured by this means not only benefited the proprietors, but also re-established the financial status of the whole of the dock stocks, and if the Company had been called upon to make the new dock some such improvement of the financial power of the Company would have been absolutely necessary for raising the necessary capital required.

All the operations of the London and India Docks Company were, however, affected by the overshadowing influence of the position created by the appointment of the Royal Commission before the Company came into existence. They were sterilized so far as administration was concerned. Before the report of the Commission was published, the Company had re-deposited the Bill in the 1902 session for charging dues on barges, in the hope that if the Commission had reported in favour of the Company's proposals in time for legislation during that session, the Bill might become law. The report was made too late in the session for any legislation, and as it did not support the Company's plan, the Bill was withdrawn. After the report was published, there was nothing to do but to wait for the promised legislation on the lines of the Commission report, and meanwhile to maintain and work the undertaking as efficiently as possible to meet the current demands of traders. The story of this legislation and the delays in accomplishing it belong to another chapter.

CHAPTER XXX

The Port of London Act

MR. GERALD BALFOUR, the President of the Board of Trade, with energy seldom exercised in translating the recommendations of Royal Commissions into action, prepared a Bill for the establishment of a Port of London Authority, and gave the necessary Parliamentary notices in the November following the date of the report of the Commission. In the King's speech on the opening of Parliament in the 1903 session, the King was made to say, "A Bill will be laid before you for improving the administration of the Port and Docks of London, the condition of which is a matter of national concern." The Bill was read a first time on the 6th April under the ten minutes rule. On the second reading which took place on the 13th May it was opposed by Sir F. Dixon Hartland, the chairman of the Thames Conservancy. His grounds of opposition were that all the benefits claimed for the proposed legislation could be obtained without it, that the purchase of the docks was undesirable in view of the superior advantages of jetties in the river for the accommodation of shipping, and that the pledging of the municipal rates in lieu of interest on the purchase money for the dock undertakings was highly objectionable. The only support given to the motion for rejection was from Mr. D. J. Morgan. Though he was the chairman of the Surrey Dock Company he was not speaking as the representative of the dock companies, but rather as a trader largely interested in timber importations, and he deprecated the formation of a gigantic municipal trust as another step towards the realization of communistic and socialistic ideas and inimical to private enterprise and traders generally. The general feeling of the House was in favour of allowing second reading. Mr. Gerald Balfour had no difficulty in securing the withdrawal of the motion for rejection, and the Bill was read a second time. It was then committed to a Joint Committee of the Lords and Commons, with the understanding that in agreeing to the second reading the House would be endorsing the policy of the purchase

of the dock undertakings. The Committee consisted of Viscount Cross (chairman), Lord Hawkesbury, Lord Wolverton, Lord Ludlow, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Lawrence Hardy, Mr. Mellor, Mr. Russell Rea and Sir C. Renshaw. Viscount Cross devoted himself with extraordinary energy for a man of his great age to getting the Bill through his Committee. A current review of the proceedings in the *Times* remarked that the criticism was sometimes made of the Parliamentary tribunal that the Bar is too strong for the Bench, but that to have seen Lord Cross's handling of perhaps the strongest Bar that had ever assembled in one committee room in recent years was to witness the triumphant refutation of the criticism. But the triumph was gained at the price of losing the Bill for want of thorough consideration. The Committee finished its work on the 13th July, and reported the Bill to the House. No purpose would be served by describing the details of the discussion in Committee. In its main principles the Bill carried out the recommendations of the Committee but for historical purposes it may be useful to set out the effect of the Bill as it left the Committee so far as it varied those recommendations. The constitution of the new authority was to be as follows :—

| | | |
|--|----|---|
| Appointed by London County Council.. | .. | 9 |
| Corporation | 1 | |
| Admiralty | 1 | |
| Board of Trade | 1 | |
| Trinity House | 1 | |
| Railway Companies | 1 | |
| Elected by payers of dues on ships trading | | |
| to docks | 7 | |
| to river | 3 | |
| by Traders | 8 | |
| Waterside Manufacturers | 2 | |
| Wharfingers | 4 | |
| Owners of River Craft | 2 | |
| | — | |
| | 40 | |
| | — | |

The municipal representation was to be doubled if the London County Council were called upon to honour their guarantee of interest on the new port stock. In the first draft of the Bill the debenture stock holders were to be paid off at an indefinite date on terms to be settled by an arbitration tribunal, but the Committee unanimously

refused to countenance the suggestion of calling the arbitrators to value perfectly solvent concerns, and decided that debenture holders should have sufficient port stock given to them to produce the existing income and not be paid off for sixty years.

The Bill had been forced through the Committee against time, and there was a general feeling that the scheme was immature and had not had a fair hearing. Opposition was threatened in the House, chiefly inspired by the city merchants and the wharfingers, and also founded on the reluctance of the business community to let the fortunes of the Port be liable to the contingency of being subsidized by the County Council. The House of Commons where at this time there was a Unionist majority was peculiarly averse to the County Council and all its works, and no one was surprised to find that a Bill which had in February been declared to be a matter of national concern was in August shelved till the following session, because no one would demand the extension of the Parliamentary session for a single day to give the Bill the necessary facilities. Thus a measure which had been introduced into Parliament almost without argument and without controversy was postponed without a protest either by the Press or even by the interests which had clamoured for reform.

What were the causes of this change of attitude? Sir Henry Le Marchant, writing in the *National Review*, and reviewing the position which had been created at the end of 1903, probably represented a large volume of the opinion which had been aroused in the course of the discussions when the practical attempt to deal with the complicated problems was submitted for public consideration. On the vital question of the management by the proposed body, Sir Henry contended that to whatever goal the proposed constitution tended that goal was not efficiency. The ship-owners, he urged, would apply their efforts to get the best accommodation for the lowest charges. The aim of traders would be the same. The four wharfingers would wish to keep rates high and would be scarcely intent on developing the facilities for warehousing business at the docks. The railway companies, having ports of their own, had interests which seriously clashed with the docks as had been proved in recent legislation. The members of the County Council

were to be appointed to protect the ratepayers, but there was a danger, judging from experience, that their chief care would not be the Port, but the working classes employed in it. In providing for the doubling of the representation of the London County Council if the rates were called in aid for three consecutive years the Bill was offering a bait to the County Council to provoke the new authority into not being self supporting. The idea at the bottom of this was the "balance of power": by which one selfish interest is introduced to check other selfish interests. Sir Henry submitted that the system of setting up a body composed of persons who were to take care that one section did not get the better of another might be an excellent one for preventing fraud or jobbery, but was bound to have only a negative result in carrying on a commercial undertaking. It could have no positive effect in the region of efficiency; there would be plenty of obstruction but little progress. He pointed out that there was no important port in the kingdom where the controlling body was composed of so many and conflicting elements. In such circumstances Sir Henry called attention to the method of dealing with the imaginary grievance of fifty authorities in the Port. Nominally a single authority was constituted, but in reality it would consist of representatives of twelve differing authorities, and such a house would be divided against itself.

Another weakness of the Bill resulted from one provision which was intended to be a proper safeguard, viz., that until the terms of the purchase of the docks were settled dock directors were excluded from membership of the new Authority. The existing directors had no grievance or complaint at not being included in the new Authority. It was only the question of efficiency of management which was involved. The first two or three years of the existence of the new Authority would be its most critical stage, and yet the paramount condition essential for appointment to a seat on the Authority was the want of all experience of the work. In other words, all of its members were not only to be persons who may be but were required to be ignorant of the special duties they had to discharge. There was no precedent for such a "qualification of ignorance" in any other case of transfer of Port undertakings to public bodies.

The clauses which were intended for the satisfaction of

the wharfingers were agreeable to no one. Their case created the chief problem of the situation. To raise easily the huge capital acquired for purchase and new works some better security than the income of the Port was imperative, and the only alternative resources were the guarantee of the nation and the metropolis. But this brought into the Port a more dangerous competitor for the wharfingers than ever subsidized dock companies would have been. To pacify the wharfingers the Parliamentary Committee had given them four representatives on the new Authority, and they had specified that at least one-third of the warehousing Committee of the new Authority should be wharfingers. A clause had been introduced which prevented the Authority in fixing its rates on goods to have any regard to the ships from which they might be discharged. This would have meant the loss of one-third of the warehousing business of the docks. A further clause tended to increase the rateable value of the dock warehouses, and so would have compelled the new Authority to charge higher rates on goods. These conditions threatened to hamper the free working of the Port, and yet did not satisfy the wharfingers, whose case was skilfully worked, securing them many friends, not the least useful being the Corporation of London who, besides having the natural antipathy of an ancient body for an upstart rival like the London County Council, were the owners of extensive riverside property, whose value was likely to be threatened by the projected legislation. During the autumn of 1903 the interest of the public, both commercial and general, cooled, especially when it began to be realized that the inevitable end of events would be that the Port of London would become a department of the London County Council. The proposal of the Premier to carry over the Bill to the session of 1904 which had been adopted by the House of Commons without discussion, left the elaborate scheme of reform in suspense for twelve months, but the Bill made no progress in the session of 1904, and was dropped at the end of that session.

There were many in the Port who had a deep interest in its welfare and who desired to have an equitable settlement, and they were disappointed and dismayed at the abandonment by the Government of the attempt to settle the question. To them it seemed an act of absolute levity to have



THE EMBARKATION OF GEORGE IV. FOR SCOTLAND.
AT GREENWICH, AUGUST 10, 1822.

touched the question and then have shirked the settlement. Four years had been wasted. It were better to have left matters alone, because if the Government failed every one else was bound to fail, too. Judging by after event, it seems clear now that the Unionist Government had been so disintegrated by the Chamberlain agitation for tariff reform that it had not even the strength to handle such a non-party subject as the Port of London. The capacity of the Government to undertake the settlement of any question got weaker and weaker as the year 1905 progressed, and with its fall at the end of that year any hope of the early reconstitution and regeneration of the Port was indefinitely postponed.

While this period of suspense lasted, various measures all bearing on the great issue were promoted by the London and India Docks Company, the Thames Conservancy, and the London County Council, and by Mr. Arnold Hills, who fathered the scheme known as the Thames Barrage.

Most of the measures were identified with the dock companies. They had determined to give the Government no rest, believing it to be the only policy ever likely to yield tangible results. In the sessions of 1901 and 1902 they re-introduced their Bills for charging dues on lighters and the goods conveyed in them in the possibility that the Royal Commission might report in favour of the Dock Company's proposals, and withdrew the Bills when it was evident that the report would not appear in time for legislation. A separate Bill was promoted in the 1902 session which became law, including useful provisions for regulating lighters at the entrances and for the better collection of such charges as were incurred on lighters. In the session of 1903 the Government Bill held the field, and no attempt was made by any of the other interests. When at the end of the 1903 session the fate of the Government Bill seemed sealed, in spite of the motion to carry it forward, the London and India Docks Company promoted a Bill embodying their own scheme. Mr. Sydney Holland, in commending it to the support of the dock stockholders, pointed out that no business could properly be carried on with a Bill for purchase hanging over it, especially when a clause was in the Bill declaring that any contract entered into pending its sanction might be upset at the expense of the company.

The Bill was broadly on the lines of the proposals submitted by Mr. Scott to the Royal Commission, but a bid was made for the support of the shipowners by the reduction of the maximum dues from 1s. 6d. to 1s. per ton, a gain to them then representing £120,000 a year. The new income was to be found by dues on goods, each dock company receiving dues on the goods discharged in its own docks and the Conservancy receiving them in respect of goods discharged in the river. The Conservancy was to be strengthened by the addition of seven shipowners or traders nominated by the Board of Trade and was to use its new income for the benefit of the river. The London and India Company were to be put under obligation to spend £2,000,000 on their new dock and other works, and to be subject to being required by the Board of Trade to carry out such further works as might be judged to be necessary for the traffic of the Port. Their dividends were to be limited to 4 per cent. The scheme was avowedly a crude one and it was put forward only as a substitute in case the Government failed to persevere with their own scheme, and also in order to keep the whole question alive. It had the possibilities of being a workable scheme, but it was handicapped by the unpopularity of any scheme for keeping the Thames Conservancy alive even as a reformed body, and also by the national dislike of conferring new taxing powers upon a commercial body. The Government could not carry their own scheme, and they would have no other.

In the same session of 1904 the London and India Docks Company endeavoured to persuade Parliament to deal with a question which had arisen with the railway companies. For many years the dock companies had provided railways at their berths and sidings on the premises in order to facilitate the shipment of goods direct from the provinces to alongside vessels in the docks, and arrangements had been in operation with the companies for handling the traffic and for the through rates chargeable to the public and the proportion payable to the dock companies. As time went on the railways had developed the practice of bringing such goods from the provinces to their waterside depots on the Thames and thence conveying them by barge alongside the vessels in the docks, thus avoiding all dock charges and making a saving for themselves on the total

cost of transit from the provincial factory to the vessel. The adoption of the water route was unfair to the dock companies as it rendered the expenditure on their railways unproductive, and it was disadvantageous to the shipper or consignee because it entailed delay in delivery and subjected his goods to extra handling. The dock company were advised that they were entitled to a share of the charges for collection and delivery which were in effect carried out on the dock premises by the dock staff, and the attempt had been made in the Railway Commissioners' Court to obtain a judgment to this effect, with the idea of appropriating a portion of their share of the through rate towards a reduction of the dock charges. The Railway Commissioners recognized the fairness of the contention, but were unable to give the relief because the dock company were not a railway company for the purposes of their application. The Bill referred to had for its chief object the removal of this legal disability. The House of Commons passed the Bill, but in the House of Lords the point was taken that the general law ought not be amended by a private Bill, and the railway companies succeeded in getting the clauses thrown out. A further attempt was made in the following session, but the Bill was dropped by an agreement with the railway companies under which consignees and shippers were to have a voice in deciding whether they would have their goods shipped or delivered by water. The agreement did not, however, bring the advantages to the docks which were hoped for.

The Thames Barrage Scheme was the subject of a Bill of which notice was given at the end of 1904. It originated with Mr. T. W. Barber, an engineer, and was enthusiastically taken up by Mr. Arnold Hills, then chairman of the Thames Iron Works. It engaged the interested attention and support of Lord Desborough, who had become the chairman of the Thames Conservancy, but received no official countenance from that body. The Bill proposed that the river below Teddington should be placed under the control of thirty-seven commissioners representing various interests, with authority to make a dam across the Thames at Gravesend. The plans provided for the dam being penetrated by four locks of a size to take in the largest class of shipping, and for the maintenance of a head of

water above the dam equal to that of high water at spring tides. The chief object secured would be constant flotation of vessels of deep draft without the necessity of dredging, enabling owners of riverside property to build quays, and so practically to make the whole of the river between Gravesend and London Bridge one huge dock, accessible at all times of the tide. The commissioners were to raise £5,000,000 for building the dam, and were to receive a toll of 1d. a ton from each vessel locked in, and also to take rates on all goods entering the Port. The attractions of the scheme were obvious, in fact too obvious to make the scheme a sound one.

The first comment of even an uninstructed student was, "Why was it not thought of before?" It had, of course, often been thought of before. The canalization of rivers was one of the oldest ideas and on the Thames itself there was already a barrage at Richmond, whilst on the Severn there is one at Gloucester which enables the branches of the river there to be converted into docks. The only question that arises is the selection of the proper point at which the dam should be placed. Practical opinion in the Port was against the scheme and expressed itself at a meeting called at the Mansion House to bless the scheme, the opinion offered by all the speakers not engaged in the promotion was opposed to it. Amongst the objections to the scheme was :—the outlay required for draining the many thousands of low lying lands against the Thames ; the pollution of the river above Gravesend by reason of depending entirely upon the very small fresh water current, especially in summer ; the loss of motive power supplied by the action of the tides ; the certainty of the river silting up below the dam requiring enormous expense to maintain the channel ; the uncertain effects on the approach channels in the estuary by the interference with tidal action ; the inadequacy of the locks to deal with the traffic of 1,000 vessels a day ; the confusion and delays in foggy weather ; the obstruction from ice in severe winters ; and the impossibility of shipping navigating the river during the construction of the barrage. And it was further pointed out that the question of securing a deeper channel was a much more urgent one at Leigh Middle below Gravesend than it was above that town. The Bill was withdrawn and the scheme has not re-appeared since.



THE UPPER POOL

The London County Council and the Conservancy made their contribution to the settlement in the session of 1905. The Conservancy, under the chairmanship of Lord Desborough, felt they might make a fresh start. Having been censured for slackness and an inadequate conception of their duty they applied to Parliament for powers to erect or subsidize the erection of public quays and jetties in the river and subject to the Board of Trade sanction, to take lands for this purpose, also to make agreements with the dock companies for the improvements of the docks. Port dues on goods imported or exported were to be authorized, and the Conservators were to be empowered to levy rates for the use of the quays and jetties. The Port tonnage dues on shipping of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per ton inwards and outwards were to be doubled, and in order to carry out the programme of quays and jetties, and also of deepening the river, power to borrow £3,000,000 was to be given to the Conservators. To placate traders for the increase of the charges on trade, it was proposed to add more shipowners to the Conservancy with representatives of traders, wharfingers and waterside manufacturers, raising the total number of the Conservators to forty-seven. The scheme was eventually reduced to the simple one of increasing the Port tonnage dues on shipping and Parliament realizing that whatever future form of Government of the Port might be decided upon would not be compromised by an assent to this application, gave the modified powers sought for, and the Conservancy proceeded with vigour to endeavour to re-establish their reputation by the active prosecution of their deepening programme, including the purchase of new bucket dredgers, and a specially designed suction dredger named after the chairman, for the removal of the shoals at Leigh Middle.

It need not be said that the London County Council scheme was a thoroughly drastic measure. It was founded on the abortive Government Bill. Hostile critics called it an illegitimate brother of that Bill. One point upon which it differed from the Government measure was in its rejection of the plan to reinforce the existing incomes of the river and docks by levying dues on goods, but merely to rely on the sources then available, supported by the rates of the metropolis. Unless the docks were going to be bought up at a break up price, the new Authority would have been

insolvent from the day it was established, and there was no hesitation expressed that this was the intention of the framers of the Bill. The Royal Commission had endeavoured to save the new Authority from London County Council control, though, as has been shown, the reliance upon a subvention from the rates would have inevitably brought it about, but now the London County Council boldly claimed twenty-four members out of forty. This would have given them not only the control of the labour in the docks employed by themselves, but whatever wages they paid would form the standard of payment of labour throughout the Port, and by this means throughout the metropolis. The Council's dislike of having business matters managed by business men is evident by the allocation of only ten places out of the forty to shipowners and two to traders. The justice to be dealt out to the dock stock holders was of the flimsiest. Every one's interest, even debenture holders, was to be extinguished and in arbitration in which three unknown arbitrators were to give awards of port stock of an unknown character, no individual holder was to be allowed to appear before the arbitrators, and the company's expenses at the arbitration were to be borne by themselves. No security was given that while the arbitration was pending, interest on debenture stocks would be paid. There was never any prospect of such a scheme being acceptable as a settlement of the question, but the Council took it to the House for second reading on the 13th April, 1905. Mr. Bonar Law, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, said the subject was too large to be dealt with by private Bill, and that though the Bill was claimed to be modelled on the Government Bill of 1903, it was only so in form and in principle it was diametrically opposed to that measure in not giving the control of the Port to those who paid for its upkeep. He considered business men the best class to manage the Port, as in Liverpool, and Glasgow, and not men who might be elected by ratepayers on quite other grounds than those connected with the Port. The Bill was supported by the Liberal opposition, and on a practically Party vote was rejected by 191 votes to 123.

During 1905 and 1906 there was much discussion in the public journals on the subject of the relative advantages of

docks and riverside quays, and Parliament was urged to approve of the principle of riverside schemes as offering the best solution of the problem. Some of the discussion was due to the activity of the promoters of schemes for riverside accommodation for large vessels. On the other hand, the idea appeared to many commercial authorities as one to employ in preference to the acquisition or extension of the docks. Antwerp, Rotterdam, Hamburg, the Tyne and Glasgow were cited as examples to follow in this respect, and in the summer of 1906, Mr. Lloyd George, as President of the Board of Trade, visited some of the Continental ports in order to study the subject. His conclusions were never made public, but his eventual inclusion of the docks in his own scheme for the Port may be taken to indicate that he had found that river jetties or quays were not the infallible panacea they were held to be in some quarters. There was much confusion of mind in the advocates of this form of accommodation. The ports mentioned above were referred to indiscriminately as furnishing instances which should be imitated on the Thames, but the accommodation is not the same at all of these ports. At Hamburg, Rotterdam and Glasgow the greater and all the more modern part of the accommodation is not in the river at all. Quays are formed round great basins which have been excavated out of the land. They are in fact docks, the only difference between such accommodation and the docks of London being that owing to the rise and fall of the tide being small no lock gates are required. At Antwerp, on the other hand, the banks of the river have been quayed, and large vessels are able to come up straight from the sea and remain afloat, but it is often ignored that at Antwerp there are docks with lock gates, and that the latest and best accommodation is in the form of docks. No one claiming to speak with authority has ever yet propounded any scheme for cutting tidal docks into the Thames, and the quays at Antwerp are usually the model selected. The idea of riverside quays is often referred to as if it were a new one for London. The readers of earlier pages will recall the fact that quays and open docks on the riverside for the discharge of vessels existed in the Port of London for some hundreds of years. It was closed dock accommodation which was the modern idea. Dealing broadly with the subject as it affects the Thames, it may

be said that riverside quays are suitable and perhaps preferable for the discharge of cargoes which are carried in bulk, such as coal and oil. In the sheltered upper reaches they also meet the requirements of small vessels discharging the whole or the greater part of their cargo direct on to the shore. But they are unsuitable for fully laden ocean going vessels with mixed cargoes such as come from the Colonies, America and the East, especially when, as is generally the case, the cargoes are taken away by barge to consignees and are not warehoused at the point of discharge. They are also unsuitable for large vessels loading mixed cargoes. The reason for this conclusion is that under the conditions of delivery it is not only inconvenient but expensive to carry on the discharge and loading of a large vessel in the fast running stream, with its tidal rise and fall of seventeen to twenty-two feet twice every twenty-four hours, and its crowded shipping and barge traffic. Often there are a hundred barges in attendance on one vessel. In dock waters these barges remain waiting comfortably, and can with perfect ease be brought to the vessel or to the quay to take delivery as they are wanted. But let such a fleet of barges be in attendance for the same operation in the Thames, and it requires little imagination to foresee the trouble there would be in manœuvring them. The risk to the vessel and the goods during the course of delivery or loading is obviously greater at a riverside quay than in the docks. A most important question which arises in connexion with the provision of riverside quays is that of cost. It is usually taken for granted that they are cheaper than dock quays. This is quite illusory. Quays in the river must be substantial, inasmuch as they have to carry cranes, railways and sheds capable of carrying thousands of tons of cargo. They have also to stand the pressure of heavy steamers subject to constant movement in a busy river. Moreover, owing to the varying tide level there is an amount of lateral pressure behind the walls which they must be designed to resist. It is true that some of the matters have to be provided for in dock systems and that in addition, costly outlay is required for the lock. But against the cost of the lock there is an enormous set off in the case of river quays, viz., that the variation in the tide necessitates that the floor of the quay shall be many feet higher above the river bottom than

the floor of the dock quay is above the dock bottom. Thus, to give a constant depth of twenty-nine feet six inches, as at the Royal Albert Dock, the floor of the dock quays is thirty-two feet above the dock bottom. In the river, the floor of a similar quay would have to be fifty-five feet to allow of the variation of tide and a margin for excessively high tides. This question of cost is not mere theory. At Antwerp the cost per foot for river quay walls was £83, whilst at the Royal Albert Dock in London the quay wall cost was only £23 per foot. Though nothing could be more misleading than to cite the example of other ports without taking into account their varying geographical and commercial conditions, it is instructive to note that the determining factor in the question is invariably the tidal one. At Liverpool, Bristol, Hull and Leith, where the tidal conditions are more or less similar to those in London, the port accommodation is in the nature of docks. On the Tyne there are many jetties and quays but they are all used as in London for coal and very small steamers, whilst ordinary sized general cargo boats are dealt with in the docks. At New York the tidal variation is only six feet and there are river jetties. At Hamburg the variation is eight feet and at Rotterdam seven feet, and at both these Continental ports open excavated basins are cut out of the marsh lands adjoining the river. At Havre and Calais, which have wider fluctuations, there are fine systems of docks. At Antwerp which has already been referred to, the variation is fourteen feet, and both dock and river berths are provided. One concluding consideration, and not the least important, has to be borne in mind. The Royal Commission expressed the opinion that London suffered as a port from the dispersion of its accommodation over a lengthened river front and wide area, compelling traders to rely chiefly on the method of barge transit which, though far cheaper than road transit is much slower, and is largely responsible for the reputation of London being a slow port. The advantage of the quays of Liverpool, Hamburg, Antwerp, and Rotterdam all being situated within a radius of three or four miles of the centre of their city commercial communities is indisputable as affecting economical distribution and especially in the handling of transhipment goods. It is now too late to reconstruct the port, but it behoves every one

reponsible to take care that all future extensions should not aggravate the present position, but should be planned in the direction of the concentration of port accommodation. Any scheme for lines of quays stretching down each side of the Thames is to be deprecated on this ground alone.

The close of the year 1905 found the port question still open. An attempt was then made to bring about a useful consolidation of the London and India and Millwall Companies, and the terms arranged between the two companies were embodied in a Bill deposited in Parliament. The Board of Trade would only allow the Bill to go forward on condition that a sterilization clause was inserted to the effect that in the event of the docks being acquired by any public body there should be no right of compensation for any benefits that might accrue from the amalgamation. The dangers of accepting such a clause were so obvious that both companies preferred to drop the Bill, and this decision was also partly due to the promise given to the companies that the new Government would legislate during 1907 session. No sign, however, was given in the autumn of 1906 of any intention to fulfil this promise, and in order to keep the question alive the London and India Docks, in November of that year, gave the requisite notices for another Bill which revived their own proposals in a modified form. The chief modifications were that a share of the dues on goods using the Port was to be distributed amongst the companies on a scale laid down, and that no dock dues were to be charged on barges, but they were to pay a small charge in consideration of services rendered at the locks. No Government measure appeared during the 1907 session, and the dock company's Bill shared the usual fate of withdrawal, but it had the effect of obtaining a solemn undertaking upon the part of the Government to legislate during the session of 1908. Though this was duly honoured by the formal notices being issued in November, 1907, the dock company deemed it wise to anticipate a second failure of the Government by re-depositing their own Bill, but informing the Government that this was no obstructive policy, but only a pressing desire on the part of the companies to achieve a settlement.

Mr. Lloyd George had been appointed President of the Board of Trade in the new Government when it came into



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By Clarkson Stanfield

power in December, 1905, and was still in that office at the end of 1907. He had signalized his occupancy of the position by bringing about a settlement of the railway dispute in the previous year, and the ability and adroitness which he had shown on that occasion encouraged some hope that he would be able to settle the Port of London question. Though the old points of difficulty remained, he had the advantage of appearing on the scene with no prejudices in his own mind and with the feeling predominant in the minds of all the parties who had been in the struggle that the question must be disposed of once and for all, unless the Port was to go under altogether. It was generally recognized that outstanding above all the other points of difficulty were two :—

1. If the Dock Companies were bought out compulsorily they were entitled to have cash or some indubitable security equivalent to cash. To raise £30,000,000 of cash by pledging the trade of the Port was impossible and the only practical scheme of finance appeared to be the hypothecation of the Metropolitan rates.
2. If the Metropolitan guarantee were resorted to the position of the wharfingers would be rendered intolerable.

Mr. Lloyd George's task was to reconcile these conflicting alternatives. In the notice for the Bill he proposed to take power for every conceivable scheme of Port Authority except that of being dependent upon the metropolitan guarantee. One alternative contemplated by him was that the new Authority should not buy the existing docks, but only build new ones, leaving the old companies to work out their own salvation. If this alternative was inserted with the design of bringing pressure to bear upon the companies to come to an agreement with him as to price and to accept port stock in payment, it may be said now that the threat had no effect in influencing the minds of the dock boards. The companies had all the best sites in their own possession, they had the experienced managers and they had the up town warehouse properties so necessary for the efficient working of the docks. A competition with any new dock erected by a Trust would soon have brought the Trust into the position of the owners of the Tilbury Dock in 1888, or else have made such a drain on the dues payable by merchants that they would have insisted upon an arrangement being come to for the stoppage of the competition. But the dock companies had always been willing to discuss

the question of purchase by agreement, and even to take port stock secured on the business of the Port with proper safeguards, and when Mr. Lloyd George intimated to the companies his desire to open negotiations they at once responded and allowed Sir William Plender on behalf of the Board of Trade to examine their books, and Mr. Crutwell, an engineer, to survey their properties. When this had been done the question of terms was opened with the London and India Docks Company and the negotiation was settled simply by a private intimation conveyed to Mr. Lloyd George, of the irreducible minimum which the directors were prepared to recommend their proprietors to take, and by this prompt acquiescence in the terms suggested. The negotiations with the Millwall and Surrey Companies were not so easily disposed of. The Millwall Company was earning no dividend on its ordinary stock and not likely to do so for many years, but it naturally was not prepared to part with a remote possibility for no consideration whatever. The Surrey Company's future was also difficult to assess, as the expenditure on their new deep water Greenland Dock had not had time to bear full fruit. Both companies were eventually satisfied, the Surrey Company on the morning of the introduction of the Bill which took place on the 2nd April, 1908.

By having persuaded the dock companies to accept port stock not secured on the rates of the metropolis, Mr. Lloyd George had disarmed the wharfingers, and though there were still many fences to get over before the Bill was safe, the bargain with the dock companies had removed the chief obstacle to success.

On the 13th April the changes which took place following upon the resignation of Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman and the formation of a Ministry by Mr. Asquith, led to Mr. Lloyd George quitting the Board of Trade for the Treasury and being succeeded by Mr. Winston Churchill. In Mr. Churchill's charge, the Bill was read a second time on the 5th May without a division. It was referred to a Joint Committee of the Lords and Commons. The chairman was Mr. Russell Rea, who had been a member of Lord Cross's committee, and his colleagues were Viscount Milner, Lord Clinton, Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, Lord Leith of Fyvie, Lord Ritchie of Dundee, Mr. Ashley,

Sir William Bull, Sir Albert Spicer, Bart., and Mr. Williamson. Lord Leith retired before the Committee had finished the hearing of the case. The proceedings of the Committee were mostly occupied by opponents of the Bill who endeavoured to kill it by evidence and argument directed to showing that the price to be paid for the docks was excessive on the ground that the condition of the dock premises would necessitate enormous sums being spent on them by the new Authority, or who desired to have as large a share as was procurable in the managing body. After the Bill had passed through the various stages it received a not too warm welcome in the House of Lords. Lord Ritchie moved its rejection, influenced by the opinion that the purchase price of the docks was too high, and his motion was seconded by Lord Leith of Fyvie, who had retired from the Joint Committee because he disapproved of the terms of purchase. Lord Avebury appeared to support the opposition of the Corporation of London, the Short Sea Traders, the Waterside Manufactures, and the Master Lightermen on the ground of the Bill's interference with private enterprise. The fears of the wharfingers had been assuaged by clauses given by Mr. Lloyd George, and this fact removed the principal difficulty in the way of the Bill proceeding. Moreover, though Mr. Bonar Law had objected to some of the provisions when the Bill was in Committee of the whole House, the official opposition was pledged to the main principle of the Bill, and the various stages in the Lords were therefore passed without serious trouble. The Royal Assent was duly given on the 21st December, 1908, and the Bill became the "Port of London Act, 1908."

The Act was such a far reaching measure and affords the solution of so many of the vexed problems of ten years that its provision must for the purposes of this record be summarized :—

The Authority is established for the purpose of administering, preserving and improving the Port of London. The limits of the Port commence at Teddington and extend down both sides of the Thames to an imaginary straight line drawn from the pilot mark at the entrance of Havengore Creek in Essex to the Lands End at Warden Point, in the Isle of Sheppey in the County of Kent, and include all islands, streams, creeks, channels, harbours, docks and

places within those limits, but do not include any part of the river Medway, the river Swale, the river Lea, or the Grand Junction Canal.

Eighteen of the members of the Authority are to be elected members, of whom seventeen are to be elected by payers of dues, wharfingers, and owners of river craft, and one elected by the wharfingers. Ten members are to be appointed members, as follows :—

| | |
|--|----|
| Admiralty | 1 |
| Board of Trade | 2 |
| London County Council, being members of Council | 2 |
| London County Council, not being members of Council | 2 |
| Corporation of London, being member of Corporation | 1 |
| Corporation of London, not being member of Corporation | 1 |
| Trinity House | 1 |
| | — |
| | 10 |
| | — |

One of the members representing the Board of Trade, and one of the members representing the London County Council, are to represent the interests of labour on the Authority. The chairman and vice-chairman are appointed by the Authority, but need not be members. The Authority may pay salaries to the chairman and vice-chairman, and chairmen of committees. The first elected members and the chairman are to be appointed by the Board of Trade. Members are exempted from service on juries.

The duty is placed upon the Authority to take into consideration the state of the river and the accommodation and facilities in the Port, and to take such steps as they may consider necessary for its improvement. For this purpose they are authorized to carry on the dock undertakings transferred to them, to acquire and carry on any undertaking affording accommodation for loading, unloading or warehousing of goods in the Port and to construct, equip and manage docks, quays, wharves, jetties, railways, etc. As from the appointed day (which was fixed for the 31st March, 1909), the undertakings of the London and India, Surrey Commercial and Millwall Companies with all their rights, powers and obligations are transferred to the Authority on the following terms :—

LONDON AND INDIA DOCKS COMPANY.

For £100 3% "A" Debenture Stock £100 "A" Port Stock
 For £100 3% "B" Debenture Stock £100 "A" do.

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| For £100 3% "C" Debenture Stock | £100 "A" Port Stock |
| For £100 4% "A" Preference Stock | £100 "A" do. |
| For £100 4% "B" Preference Stock | £100 "B" do. |
| For £100 Preferred Ordinary Stock | £100 "B" do. |
| For £100 Deferred Ordinary Stock | £75 "B" do. |

SURREY COMMERCIAL DOCK COMPANY.

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| For £100 4½% Debenture Stock | £150 "A" Port Stock |
| For £100 "A" Preference Stock | £112 10s. "B" do. |
| For £100 5% "B" Preference Stock | £125 "B" do. |
| For £100 5% "C" Preference Stock | £125 "B" do. |
| For £100 5% "D" Preference Stock | £125 "B" do. |
| For £100 5% "E" Preference Stock | £125 "B" do. |
| For £100 Ordinary Stock | £95 "B" do. |

MILLWALL DOCK COMPANY.

| | |
|--|---|
| For £100 5% Debenture Stock | £133 6s. 8d. "A" Port Stock and £25 "B" Port Stock |
| For £100 4% Debenture Stock | £100 "A" Stock and £25 "B" Stock |
| For £100 5% Preference Stock | £94 "B" Port Stock |
| For £100 4½% Preference Stock | £45 "B" do. |
| For £100 new 5% Preference Stock | £35 "B" do. |
| For £100 Ordinary Stock | £24 10s. "B" do. |

The total amount of port stock issued to the holders of the dock securities was to be :—

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| "A" Stock | £9,152,152 |
| "B" Stock | 13,210,707 |
| | <hr/> £22,362,859 |

Power is given to the Authority to acquire compulsorily, land adjoining the river east of Barking for the purposes of the Port, subject to the consent of the Board of Trade after a public inquiry.

The rights, powers and duties of the Thames Conservancy below Teddington are transferred to the Authority, together with the lower navigation fund of the Conservancy, and all their assets and liabilities. The Thames Conservancy is reconstituted by the Act for the purpose of administering the Act above Teddington, and the Authority are given one representative on the new Conservancy.

The powers and duties of the Watermen's Company are transferred to the Authority so far as they relate to the registration and licensing of craft and boats, and the licensing and government of lightermen. A power is

conferred upon the Authority to vary the qualifications to be possessed by applicants for lightermen's and watermen's licences, and also by provisional order to increase the registration fees on barges.

Port rates on goods are authorized on all goods imported or exported, subject to maxima to be fixed by a Provisional Order to be made by the Board of Trade, with exemptions in favour of transshipment goods. For the protection of port stock holders it is stipulated that the rates to be specified in the schedule should be such that in the opinion of the Board of Trade, would enable the Authority to meet its expenditure and provide a reasonable margin for contingencies. If in each of two successive years the aggregate amount of Port rates exceeds one-thousandth part of the aggregate value of the goods imported from or exported to parts beyond the seas in the year, or if the amount received referable to goods discharged from or to be on board ships outside the docks exceeds one three-thousandth part of the aggregate value, the Authority are required to take steps to prevent the continuance of the excess, including, if necessary, an application to Parliament for further means of meeting their obligations. The last of these two provisions was agreed to for the purpose of preventing the Authority from penalizing the classes of goods usually dealt with in the river. Goods entering or leaving the Medway are exempted from Port rates.

The powers of levying dues on vessels entering the London and India Docks are made applicable to the whole of the docks transferred to the Authority, thereby fixing the maximum dues at 1s. 6d. per ton, with 2d. per ton rent from the date of entrance.

Preferential rates on goods and shipping are forbidden, but differential rates are permitted when the circumstances differ.

For the purpose of enabling the Authority to borrow they are empowered to issue Port of London stock to be called "Port Stock," consisting of "A" stock bearing interest at 3 per cent., and "B" stock bearing interest at 4 per cent., and also other classes of stock ranking *pari passu* with "B" stock, and bearing interest at such rate as the Authority may resolve. The total amount of port stock created is not to exceed by more than £5,000,000 the amount of stock

issued as the consideration for the transfer of the undertakings of the dock companies. With certain exceptions, port stock is to be redeemable within ninety years, and a sinking fund is to be established within ten years for its extinction. In the event of default in the payment of interest holders of port stock of a value of £500,000 may apply for the appointment of a receiver and manager of the Authority's undertaking.

The Act prescribes the order in which the receipts on revenue account shall be applied after payment of working expenses, giving priority to the payment of interest on "A" stock before all the other interest charges, and directs the Authority to carry to a reserve fund such parts of the receipts on revenue account as may be available until the fund amounts to £1,000,000 and to restore the fund to that amount if it should be subsequently reduced. The reserve fund is primarily applicable to meeting deficiencies on revenue account, but the Board of Trade may allow it to be applied to other purposes if they consider it expedient to do so.

The Authority are required to submit an annual estimate of their receipts and expenditure to the Board of Trade who, if satisfied that the expenditure may not be met by the receipts have power to call upon the Authority to levy increased or additional dues or charges. The Board of Trade appoint an auditor to audit the annual accounts of the Authority.

An important provision for the protection of traders and wharfingers enacts that on complaint being made to the Board of Trade that the Authority are acting oppressively by reason of the mode in which they carry on their dock or warehousing business, including the charges made in respect of such business, the Board shall call upon the Authority for an explanation and shall endeavour to settle amicably the difference between the complainant and the Authority, and submit to Parliament reports thereon. If the complaint is made on behalf of a trade association and the Board of Trade are unable to settle the difference they may make such order as in their opinion the circumstances require.

No attempt is made in the Act to unify the powers of the dock companies, which in the course of a hundred

years have become various and complicated, but the opportunity was taken to remove the disability from which the dock companies had suffered by not possessing the status of a railway company for the purposes of such of the provisions of the Railway and Canal Traffic Acts, 1854 to 1888 as relate to through rates. A new duty is cast upon the Authority to take into consideration the existing methods of engagement of workmen employed in the Port, and to take such steps as they think best calculated to diminish the evils of casual employment.

A large proportion of the Act relates to the machinery connected with the triennial appointment and election of members with the design of securing a fair allotment of representation as between shipowners and traders. Elaborate scales of voting are given in the schedules with this object in view, and a proviso is added that if at any time it appears to the Board of Trade that, as a result of the qualifications and scales of votes fixed by the schedule, the voting power of any class of voters is disproportionate to their interest in the Port, the Board may by provisional order, make such variations in the qualifications and scales of voting, as may seem to them to be just. The Act lays down the procedure at meetings of the Authority, authorizing them to appoint committees and to delegate their powers to them, but a reservation is made that they may not delegate the power of raising money, of fixing rates or charges, or of making applications to Parliament.

A series of provisions relates to the officers and servants of the several undertakings transferred to the Authority. The whole of the staffs concerned become members of the staff of the Authority as from the appointed day on the same terms and conditions as were applicable to them in their previous employment. The Authority may abolish the office of any existing officer or servant which they deem unnecessary, and if any employee is required to perform duties not analagous to his old duties he is entitled to relinquish his service and be entitled to compensation. Any employee whose services are dispensed with within five years of the appointed day can claim compensation.

Transitory provisions provide for the maintenance of the undertakings of the dock companies until the appointed day, for the payment of dividends during the interregnum,

for the dissolution of the dock companies, for the payment of compensation in "A" port stock to the dock directors as follows :—London and India Docks Company, £67,600 ; Surrey Commerical Dock Company, £40,000 ; Millwall Company, £20,000 ; for two at least of the members of the Authority being persons of experience in dock management until the first retirement of members ; and for the Board of Trade to have power to remove any difficulty which may arise with respect to the establishment of the Port Authority or the holding of its first meeting. There are several saving sections for the benefit of Government Departments and others, including one entitling riparian authorities and owners to compensation from the Authority for any damage to their premises caused by dredging or deepening of the river.

The Board of Trade appear through the Act as the controlling Government Department. They are to be found in thirty-four of the sixty-three sections of the Act. They appoint the first chairman and determine his salary and appoint half of the first Board. No money can be raised without their consent, or any stock issued. They fix the rates to be charged and act as arbitrators in all disputes with traders, or on questions of compensation to staff. Their sanction is required for the acquisition of land. They are the channel by which the Authority apply to Parliament for provisional orders. At the beginning of the year they study what the Authority is going to do, and at the year's end they review what has been done. They can adjust the electorate to suit their own ideas of what sort of an Authority is wanted. Having been the parent of the Bill, the Act leaves them in the position of critic, judge, and friend. With such a constitution the word "authority" is a misnomer. In actual unfettered power no authority in England can have less freedom and more limitations, and yet liberty and elasticity are two of the most important governing principles of commercial success. Theoretically, therefore, the Port Authority is in leading strings. But it is the distinguishing character of British institutions that they flourish on anomalies, inconsistencies, and handicaps that would paralyse the enterprises of other nations, and so far, the inconveniences and obstructions which the objectors foretold as inevitable have remained as unfulfilled prophecies.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Port of London Authority from its establishment till August, 1914

AS already stated, the first elected members of the Authority were, owing to the absence of any electorate, to be selected by the Board of Trade. The Board consulted the various interests which they conceived should be represented on the Authority before making their nominations, and when the bodies entitled to appoint members had made their selections the following gentlemen formed the first Port of London Authority :—

APPOINTED MEMBERS.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| By the Admiralty | ADMIRAL MOSTYN FIELD |
| By the Board of Trade | JOSEPH GUINNESS BROODBANK |
| | HARRY GOSLING (Labour) |
| By the London County Council.. | SIR JOHN MCDUGALL |
| (Members of Council) | WILLIAM HENRY PANNELL |
| By the London County Council.. | JOHN DUTHIE |
| (Not Members of Council) | JAMES ANDERSON (Labour) |
| By the Corporation of London .. | JAMES WILLIAM DOMONEY |
| (Member) | |
| By the Corporation of London .. | LORD RITCHIE OF DUNDEE |
| (Non-member) | |
| By the Trinity House | CAPTAIN HERBERT ACTON BLAKE |

ELECTED MEMBERS.

ION HAMILTON BENN
CHARLES EDWARD BRIGHTMAN
CHARLES CHARLETON
SIR EDWIN ANDREW CORNWALL, M.P.
GEORGE THEODORE CROSFIELD
SIR CHRISTOPHER FURNESS, M.P.
CHARLES FREDERICK LEACH
LIONEL ALFRED MARTIN
HENRY TAIT MOORE
OWEN COSBY PHILIPPS, M.P.
EDWARD GEORGE SALTMARSH
HUGH COLIN SMITH
CHARLES FRANKLIN TORREY
SIR MONTAGU CORNISH TURNER
FENWICK SHADFORTH WATTS
WILLIAM WEDDEL
RICHARD WHITE
WILLIAM VARCO WILLIAMS



The Rt. Hon. VISCOUNT DEVONPORT, P.C.

Chairman of the Port of London Authority.

From a photograph by Elliott & Fry.

The Board of Trade appointed Sir Hudson Kearley, M.P. for Devonport and Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Trade, as the first chairman of the Port Authority. Sir Hudson Kearley had, with Sir H. Llewellyn Smith, the Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade, been associated with Mr. Lloyd George in all the various stages of the Bill, and had been primarily responsible for carrying it through Parliament. Sir Hudson relinquished the salary of £4,000 a year attached to the office of chairman of the Authority.

Mr. Sydney Bates, one of the directors of the London and India Docks Company, was added to the Authority as a "person of experience in dock management" under the section authorizing extra members with this qualification.

The total number of the Authority on its establishment was therefore thirty. Of these, seven had been members of the Thames Conservancy, viz. :—

SIR JOHN McDUGALL
W. H. PANNELL
C. E. BRIGHTMAN
SIR E. CORNWALL
R. WHITE
W. V. WILLIAMS
H. GOSLING

The Board of Trade appointed Sir William Plender, of Messrs. Deloitte, Plender, Griffiths & Company, to be the auditor of the accounts of the Authority, and has annually renewed the appointment.

The first meeting of the Authority was summoned by the Board of Trade to be held in the Board Room of the London and India Docks Company, 109 Leadenhall Street, on Tuesday, the 16th March, 1909. Every member was present. At this meeting only formal business was transacted, but the chairman took the opportunity of addressing the members explaining the duties and responsibilities imposed upon them by the Port of London Act.

The first work of the Authority was to take over the various undertakings which it had been formed to administer, and to make the arrangements for carrying them on after the amalgamation. A fortnight was far too short a time to leave for such an operation, but directly after the Act received the Royal Assent, on the 21st December, 1908,

the officials of the Conservancy and dock companies had begun to consider the provisional arrangements, and these were in such an advanced state that the fusion was carried out without hitch and without complaint from the public.

In satisfaction of the purchase price fixed by the Act the Authority issued in substitution for existing stocks the following amounts of port stock :—

| | <i>"A" 3% Port Stock.</i> | <i>Annual Interest.</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| London and India Company | £7,978,876 | £239,366 |
| Surrey Company | 522,000 | 15,660 |
| Millwall Company | 651,276 | 19,539 |
| | <hr/> £9,152,152 | <hr/> £274,565 |

| | <i>"B" 4% Port Stock.</i> | <i>Annual Interest.</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| London and India Company | £9,893,718 | £395,749 |
| Surrey Company | 2,388,485 | 95,539 |
| Millwall Company | 928,504 | 37,140 |
| | <hr/> £13,210,707 | <hr/> £528,428 |

Total £22,362,859, with interest of £802,993.

The new Port stock was officially quoted on the Stock Exchange on the 25th June, 1909; its issue to the various shareholders of the three dock undertakings was completed in March, 1910, and the Board of Trade gave notice of the dissolution of each company as from the 22nd March, 1910.

The Act required the Authority to extinguish one year from the transfer, the £100,000 redeemable "A" debenture stock of the Thames Conservancy by issuing to the holders of such stock an equal amount of "A" Port stock, and the new stock was accordingly issued in March, 1910.

By the close of the first financial year the amount of capital liabilities had been further increased by the following sums :

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Compensation to Directors. (In Port Stock) | £127,600 |
| Repayment of Mortgages of London and India Company .. | 348,350 |
| Stamp Duties | 28,113 |
| Winding-up Expenses of Companies | 8,904 |
| Repayment of Thames Conservancy Bank Loan | 80,000 |
| Expense of Transfer of Conservancy | 988 |
| Expenses of the Port of London Act | 18,544 |
| Capital Expenditure on Works of first year | 21,193 |
| | <hr/> 633,692 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| <i>Less</i> Excess of Floating Assets over Floating Liabilities of | |
| Dock Companies and Conservancy | 68,385 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £565,307 |

Making the total capital expenditure to 31st December, 1910,
£23,028,166

In taking over the Watermen's Company the Authority exercised an option given to them of delegating its powers to the Company, retaining for themselves the registration and licensing of craft and boats.

At the second meeting of the Authority, Mr. Owen Philipps was appointed vice-chairman of the Authority. The Act authorized salaries being paid to the vice-chairman and chairman of committees, but the Authority decided that no salary should be paid to the vice-chairman or the chairman of any committee other than the Dock and Warehouse Committee.

The question of creating adequate machinery to cope with the responsibilities immediately devolving upon the Authority was at once considered, and the work of management was allocated amongst the following committees:—

WORKS AND IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE
DOCK AND WAREHOUSE COMMITTEE
RIVER COMMITTEE
FINANCE COMMITTEE
STAFF AND STORES COMMITTEE
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Later, the Works and Improvements Committee was dissolved, and the subject of stores was referred to a separate committee. A General Purposes Committee was appointed to deal with large works of improvements and broad questions of policy affecting the undertaking as a whole.

The appointment of officials was for a time tentative. Within the first two years the headquarters staff was completed, the principal officers being Mr. Robert Philipson (who had been secretary of the Thames Conservancy), general manager; and Mr. Frederick Palmer, who had been chief engineer to the Commissioners for the Port of Calcutta, chief engineer. Other appointments were Mr. F. Ayliffe, secretary; Mr. C. R. Kirkpatrick, assistant chief engineer, who succeeded Mr. Palmer on his resignation in March, 1913; Mr. H. H. Watts, dock and warehouse

manager ; Mr. J. H. Estill, commercial superintendent ; Mr. H. Norris, chief superintendent of the docks ; Mr. J. H. Thomas, storekeeper ; Mr. H. E. Upton, comptroller ; Mr. T. Hirst, statistical officer ; and Mr. W. H. Elwell, land and estate manager.

Each of the transferred dock undertakings had had its own police force, and these were amalgamated on the inception of the Authority. The status of the police force was, however, not of the highest class owing to the straitened finances of the companies, and the Authority appointed Mr. E. Stuart Baker, of the Indian Police, as their chief police officer, to reorganize the whole force.

The Port Authority's most important and urgent duty was the improvement of the Port, but before this duty could be exercised it was necessary to obtain the means of raising the necessary capital required, which Parliament had provided by the mandate to the Board of Trade to embody in a provisional order a schedule of rates on all goods entering the Port. The Authority at a very early date after its establishment prepared a draft schedule and circulated it widely amongst the leading trade organizations, inviting their observations and suggestions. Objections and criticisms were considered in detail, and modifications were made in many of the rates objected to. The schedule as finally adopted by the Authority was submitted to the Board of Trade, who embodied it in a draft Provisional Order, and appointed Lord St. Aldwyn to hold a public inquiry under the provisions of the Act. Lord St. Aldwyn held thirteen public sittings and made reductions in some individual cases. Clauses were inserted in the order requiring that export rates should not exceed one-half the import rates, and that except in the case of coal the rates on coast-wise goods should not exceed one-half of the rates on oversea goods. The maximum schedule was at the time it came into operation, viz., the 3rd August, 1910, estimated to yield £484,000 per annum. As, however, the Authority were restricted to raising not more than the one-thousandth part of the aggregate value of the goods imported into and exported out of the Port from and to parts beyond the seas, the full rates under the schedules could not be applied. The restriction mentioned allowed of about £320,000 per annum being collected, and therefore the actual



A VIEW OF LONDON FROM THE THAMES.

From an Aquatint by J. Bluck.

import rates imposed were fixed at about 66 per cent. and the export rates at 25 per cent. of the maximum import rates.

Another new source of income provided for the Authority was from the licensing of craft and boats which whilst enjoying exceptional privileges under the "free water" conditions had hitherto made but little contribution to Port revenues. The Authority, before attempting to fix any scale of charges, called a conference of the parties affected, and by general agreement the following scale was adopted, viz. :—

| | | | <i>Maximum Fees.</i> | <i>Fees to be imposed.</i> |
|---------------|----|----|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Dumb craft | .. | .. | 1s. per reg. ton | 8d. per reg. ton |
| Sailing craft | .. | .. | 1s. do. | 8d. do. |
| Canal barges | .. | .. | 20s. each | 10s. each |
| Canal boats | .. | .. | 7s. 6d. each | 5s. each |
| Tugs | .. | .. | £6 each | £5 each |

The estimated yield of these rates was £17,000 a year. Application was made to the Board of Trade for the necessary orders and for the confirmation of by-laws fixing the actual fees to be imposed, and after a public inquiry the Board of Trade issued an order and provisional order and confirmed the by-laws subject to the following amendments :—

1. The fee to be paid for the registration of barges under by-laws to be 6d. per ton instead of 8d.
2. Steam barges to pay 6d. per ton, with an additional payment of £2 per barge.

The amendments involved a reduction of about 25 per cent. in the anticipated revenue.

While these new financial powers were being obtained the Authority were considering the question of the works which should be carried out in order to fulfil the duty imposed upon them. These works naturally divided themselves into two categories, viz., works of reparation and works of improvement.

As will have been seen, one of the reasons urged against the purchase of the docks and the terms of that purchase was that the docks had not been maintained in a satisfactory state, especially the London and India system ; indeed, it was roundly declared in some quarters that the directors had deliberately starved maintenance in order to swell the profits in view of purchase. That more money could have been spent if it had been desired to keep the docks up to the

the standard of, say, a Government dockyard, is perfectly true, and that the directors would have been prepared to adopt that standard if merchants and shipowners had also been prepared to pay may also be accepted. But that there was ever any intention to lower the standard, such as it had been, may be dismissed merely by a study of the figures in the dock accounts for many years previous to the appointment of the Royal Commission. It must be admitted that the appearance of some of the sheds was shabby, that the roads did not present so perfect a surface as that of the Mall, and that in the lower docks there was a great deal of untidy and unfinished work, but the inspection of the two engineers who were appointed to examine the docks respectively by the Royal Commission and the Joint Committee of 1908 revealed no defects in the all-important matter of lock gates and hydraulic power ; in fact, such defects as there were, were on the surface, and not constitutional defects affecting the earning-power of the undertaking. There is, however, no gainsaying the general impression of the commercial public and of the members of the Authority that there were years of neglect to make up, and it was in these circumstances that Mr. F. Palmer, the chief engineer, was instructed to report as to the sums necessary to place the docks into a proper state of repair.

The chief engineer accordingly examined the dock properties and premises, and he reported generally that they had not been maintained in a proper state of repair, and that to insure the efficient and safe working of the undertaking a large and immediate expenditure was absolutely necessary. The resident engineers who had been for some years in charge were instructed to prepare estimates of the cost of the repairs and renewals required in order to bring the properties into an efficient state of maintenance. The total estimated cost was £735,611, distributed as follows :—

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|------|----|----------|
| London and St. Katharine Docks | | .. | £90,560 |
| East and West India | .. | .. | 150,240 |
| Victoria and Albert | .. | .. | 265,652 |
| Tilbury | .. | .. | 86,448 |
| Surrey Commercial | .. | .. | 80,884 |
| Millwall | .. | .. | 61,827 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| | | | £735,611 |
| | | | <hr/> |

The estimate was adopted by the Authority, but for financial reasons it was found practicable only to sanction an immediate expenditure of about £70,000 on such of the repairs as were most urgent. In following years progress was made with the works, and at the opening of the war in 1914 a sum of £419,000 had been spent. War has necessarily curtailed expenditure on this and other works. But though the delay has been in no way attributable to apathy on the part of the Authority, the case against the good faith of the dock directors fails when it is found that five years after they have given up the control, the Authority with ample means had only spent little more than half the sum which, according to their chief engineer, was immediately necessary to "insure the efficient and safe working of the dock undertakings." It may be added that at no period of their existence have the demands upon the docks been so insistent as during the war, and yet work has been carried on without any hitch due to neglect of maintenance.

Apart from dredging, of keeping the machinery in perfect condition, and of securing the safe manipulation of handling goods in warehouses and sheds, the question of maintenance of the docks is largely one of what a board choose to spend on it. In the nature of things there is much work done at the docks in which the rough handling of goods by even a small proportion of the labour employed soon dents and damages the surface of quays and sheds, especially when the construction is of iron or timber. The employment of brick and the frequent painting of buildings and the constant renewals of surfaces will render the docks much more presentable, and if merchants and shipowners think it worth while paying it can be done. But they usually decline to be interested the moment they are asked to pay for appearances only, and it is some defence of their attitude that the materialization of the ideals of engineers, if unchecked by commercial expediency, might easily be the ruin of the greatest port in the world.

The much more important question of improvements required longer and more careful consideration of the Authority than that of reparation. The river section of this subject was the first to be taken in hand. The materials for consideration were already largely provided in the reports of the two commissions of 1887 and 1900, and also in the report

of a Committee of Engineers which was appointed in 1908 by the Thames Conservancy to report on the condition of the river and submit proposals for improvement. On a report from their chief engineer the Authority decided to proceed with the following scheme of deepening the river :

| | | <i>Width of channel</i> | <i>Minimum depth of channel at low water springs.</i> |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| | | <i>Ft.</i> | <i>Ft.</i> |
| London Bridge to Tower Bridge .. | | 450 | .. 14 |
| Tower Bridge to Thames Tunnel .. | | 500 | .. 14 |
| Thames Tunnel to Greenland Dock .. | | 500 | .. 16 |
| Greenland Dock to Royal Albert Dock | | 600 | .. 20 |
| Albert Dock to Crayfordness | | 600 | .. 30 |
| Crayfordness to the Nore | | 1,000 | .. 30 |

The additional plant required was contracted for at a cost of £426,000, capable of dealing with 5,000,000 cubic yards of material per annum. The plant used for the purpose included the suction dredger which had been acquired by the Thames Conservancy, four new dredgers ordered by the Authority, and fifteen hopper barges, in which the material raised was conveyed to the mouth of the estuary for deposit in the Black Deep.

During the preparation of a comprehensive programme of improvements, the Authority proceeded to carry out some works which, though not involving heavy expenditure, were of a most serviceable character, such as the installation of new pumping machinery for the Albert and Victoria Docks, by which the height of water was permanently raised by two feet six inches ; the provision of forty-one new electric cranes for the Albert Docks capable of lifting three tons, in place of hydraulic cranes lifting one and a half tons ; new timber sheds at the Surrey Commercial Docks ; the reconstruction of the North Quay, London Dock, where double-storied ferro-concrete sheds were built in place of the century-old single-storied wooden sheds ; and the remodelling and equipment of accommodation at the Albert Dock, with receiving and sorting lines for the South American beef trade. The most important of these works decided on in anticipation of the programme of improvements were those in connexion with the New Zealand trade. Representations had been made to the

Authority by the agents of New Zealand agricultural and other organizations that it was desirable to make improvements in the facilities for the handling of frozen meat in the Port of London. The principal points urged were that barge transit from the ship to the cold store should be abandoned in favour of the quickest land route, that the Authority's store in Smithfield should be extended, and that all meat should be discharged direct into a refrigerated shed and sorted there instead of being sorted in the ship's hold. Different opinions were put forward as to the docks to be selected for the improved accommodation, some of the traders' representatives preferring the South West India Dock as being nearer the meat market, and another group preferring the Royal Albert Dock as being more accessible for shipping and possessing more possibilities for railway communication for meat intended for the provinces. The proposed sorting shed was the revival of a project considered by the dock companies some years before, and then abandoned because, though both shipowners and merchants acknowledged its benefits, neither was prepared to pay for the accommodation. At first the Authority was disposed to adopt the attitude of the dock companies and to decline to incur the heavy outlay required without an assurance of its being used when constructed. Reconsideration of the question, however, induced them to decide on erecting the sorting shed at the Royal Albert Dock with a large refrigerated store connected with it by conveyors, and to take the risk of whether the interests concerned would use it sufficiently to give an adequate return. They were induced to come to this decision because the meat trade was becoming a most important one and well worth running some financial risk to maintain. They were able to reduce that risk by constructing the sorting shed as the top storey of a double-storied shed and by providing for a temperature which would enable the sorting shed to be used alternatively as a frozen meat store if it should turn out not to be required by traders for sorting purposes. The total sum of about £400,000 was authorized for these works.

Another item of expenditure was incurred in the reform of the ambulance service at the docks. The arrangements for dealing with accident cases amongst the employees at the docks were found to be unsatisfactory. Many of the

ambulances and stretchers were defective, and in some departments no appliances existed at all, and the lack of an organized system of instruction in first aid or for conveying the injured to the hospital was much felt. Acting upon the recommendation of a committee, the Authority sanctioned the purchase of four electric motor ambulances fitted for dealing with accident cases. They are made available throughout the twenty-four hours, and every department is in direct telephonic communication with the service, which is under the control of the Authority's police, instructed in the principles of first aid.

A draft programme of works of improvement of the accommodation in the Port, prepared by Mr. Palmer, was submitted to the Authority by Lord Devonport on the 19th January, 1911. The instruction given to Mr. Palmer had been to consider in his report the whole range of possibilities of dock reconstruction and developments throughout the Port, including the provision of new dock accommodation, and he accomplished his task with great ability and thoroughness. To facilitate its consideration, Lord Devonport classified the various proposals under three categories :—

The first, or urgent programme embracing works necessary to be carried out without delay in order to give at the earliest moment the much-needed increase of accommodation and estimated to cost £3,896,700.

The second programme comprising such works as, given a continuance of the normal growth of trade in the Port, would be necessary by the time the first programme is completed. The works under this head are estimated to cost £5,722,000.

The third or contingent programme, depending upon eventualities. The estimated cost of these works is £4,808,000.

The following is a statement in detail of the works included in the several programmes :—

FIRST PROGRAMME.

| LONDON DOCKS— | | | | | | | £ |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| Reconstruction of Tobacco Dock Entrance ; | | | | | | | |
| New jetty, Western Dock ; New berths, Eastern | | | | | | | |
| Dock ; Shadwell Basin, North Quay ; Pumping | | | | | | | |
| plant | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 335,000 |

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| | |
|--|-------------------|
| WEST INDIA DOCKS— | £ |
| Entrance lock ; New basin and berths, passages and bridges ; Improvements to Import Dock and South West India Dock ; New dry dock ; Pumping plant | 960,000 |
| MILLWALL DOCK— | |
| Dry dock extensions | 12,700 |
| ALBERT DOCK— | |
| A new dock to the south of the existing dock, including entrance lock, sheds, dry dock, railways, etc. ; land for a dock to the north of the existing dock | 2,589,000 |
| | <u>£3,896,700</u> |

SECOND PROGRAMME.

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| WEST INDIA DOCK— | £ |
| Internal improvements to Import Dock and South West India Dock | 145,000 |
| VICTORIA DOCK— | |
| New entrance lock | 385,000 |
| ALBERT DOCK— | |
| Reconstruction of entrance lock ; widening of quays ; new dry dock | 615,000 |
| SOUTH ALBERT DOCK— | |
| Completion of works | 247,000 |
| NORTH ALBERT DOCK— | |
| A new dock to the north of the Albert Dock, with entrance lock of 1,000 feet by 120 feet, with 52 feet depth on sills | 4,100,000 |
| TILBURY DOCK— | |
| Landing stage ; new dry dock | 230,000 |
| | <u>£5,722,000</u> |

THIRD PROGRAMME.

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| LONDON DOCKS— | £ |
| Improvement of Wapping Basin ; Riverside berth at Shadwell ; Additional berths, Shadwell Basin | 267,000 |
| MILLWALL DOCK— | |
| New dock and passage ; New entrance lock | 735,000 |
| EAST INDIA DOCKS— | |
| Internal improvements to Import and Export Dock | 268,000 |
| VICTORIA DOCK— | |
| Reconstruction of dock | 920,000 |
| TILBURY DOCK— | |
| Extension of main dock ; New dock, including entrance lock, dry docks, railways, etc. | 2,618,000 |
| | <u>£4,808,000</u> |

The total of these estimates is £14,426,700.

While generally approving of this programme the Authority found it impracticable to proceed with the whole of the works of the first programme at the same time. In view of the growing trade, it would have been impossible to close the whole of the berths concerned without causing grave delays to shipping and dislocation of traffic. Moreover, there were certain features in the West India Dock scheme which appeared to have objections from the point of view of working. The Authority, therefore, decided to vary the order of the programme by undertaking such works as did not interfere with the carrying on of business or as were in situations where the accommodation was being utilized only to a small extent. On this principle they sanctioned the immediate construction of the new dock to the south of the Royal Albert Dock, the rebuilding of the Tobacco Entrance of the London Dock and a new ferro-concrete jetty there in place of a derelict old jetty, the entire reconstruction of the North Quay and its sheds at the West India Import Dock, and a similar reconstruction at the north and east quays of the East India Dock. At Tilbury the work decided upon was an extension by 1,600 feet of the south quay of the Main Dock with three new sheds, the largest yet erected in the Port. The estimated cost of all these works was £2,671,471. Contracts were entered into and the works commenced and completed without undue delay, except the new dock to the south of the Albert Dock, where the circumstances created by the war have much delayed the progress of the works.

By far the most important of these new undertakings is the new dock to the south of the Albert Dock. The area of the dock will be 65 acres, a length of quay of 9,900 lineal feet, and depth of water in the dock maintained by pumping at 35 feet, but capable of being dredged to 38 feet if required. The transit sheds will be single and double storey. The entrance lock will be 800 feet long by 100 feet broad, large enough to dock vessels up to 35,000 tons. By the addition of a caisson, the length of the lock can be enlarged to 950 feet, and so if necessary enable vessels of 50,000 tons to be admitted, but it is held that for this dock, vessels of the latter size are unsuitable and that they should be accommodated at Tilbury, the docking of the longest

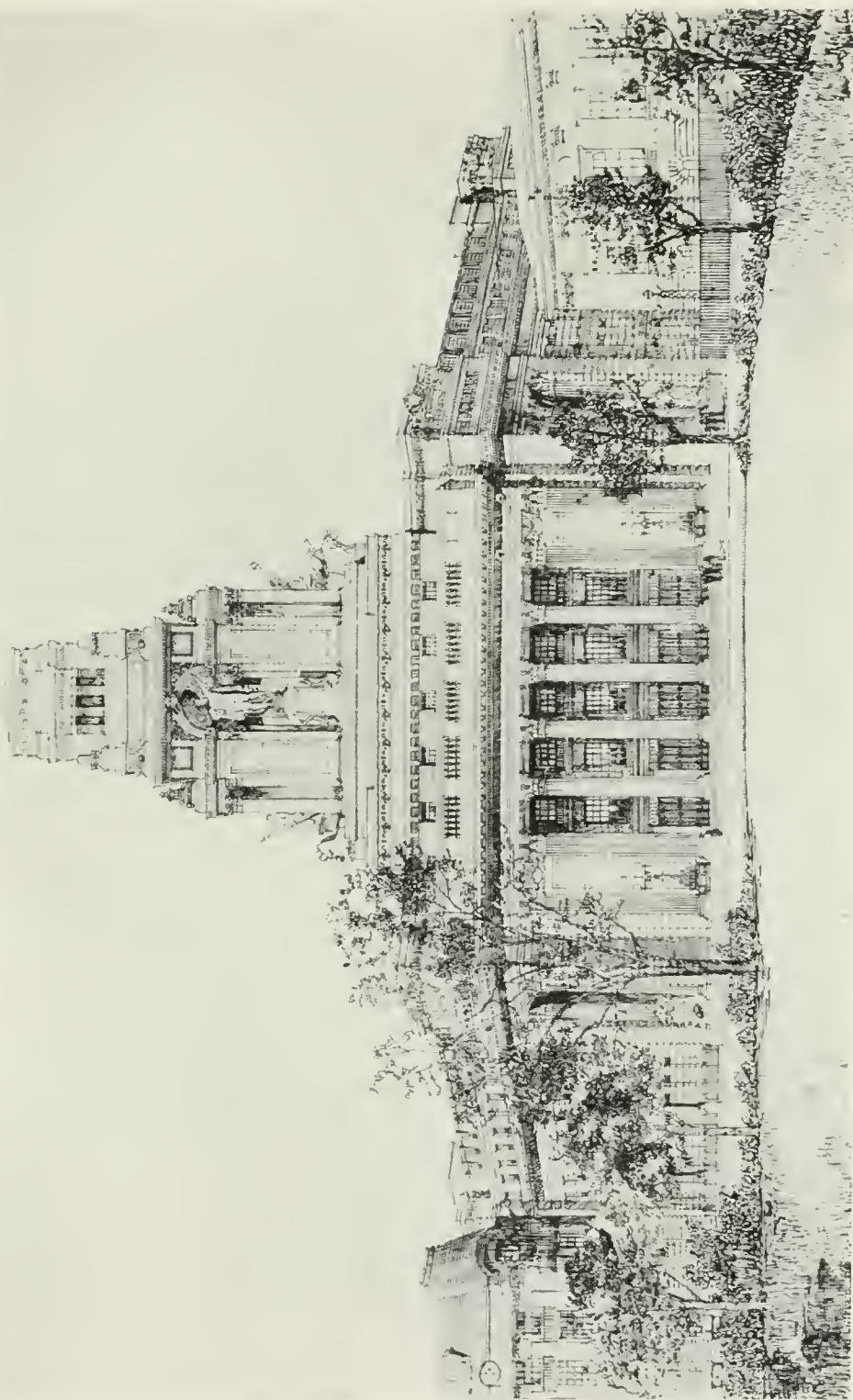
vessels in the higher reaches being likely to lead to delays and difficulties with the river traffic. The dry dock is to be 750 feet long by 100 feet broad, but it can be lengthened as required. The south side of the new dock will be furnished with novel accommodation, specially designed to meet the peculiar requirements of ocean-going vessels coming to London. A narrow quay is being constructed parallel to the main quay with sufficient room for barges to lie between the two quays, the object being that the cranes to be erected on the narrow quays and used to discharge vessels shall also be able to deliver goods either into the dock sheds or into barges, or that if so desired, goods may be delivered from the shed into barges while the discharge of the vessel is proceeding. The scheme is intended to satisfy the demand for better facilities for barge delivery and remove one of the causes of complaints against the London barge system, so cheap and efficient, but hitherto involving delays which the more expensive rail or road transit avoids.

The question of meeting the demand for accommodation in the river early engaged the attention of the Authority. The demand had never been of a specific character from any responsible shipowners, and the several abortive schemes which had been put forward in the Thames Conservancy period had been promoted by landowners or private speculators, and not by shipowners, and were intended to attract the investor rather than to meet the requirements of shipowners. The Port of London Act, whilst not saying so in terms, had obviously underlying it the principle that the public accommodation in the Port below Barking for ocean-going shipping should in future be provided by the Port of London Authority. It would have been wasting all the hopes that had been founded on the settlement arrived at to extinguish the old dock companies in favour of a Port Authority, and then gradually to allow a series of wharf establishments in the river to be set up for the purpose of providing accommodation in competition with the docks. The Authority would merely become a large dock company, unable to operate as an impartial body administering the Port, and always have on its flank the competition of irresponsible rivals—rivals which it might even serve the purpose of powerful shipping interests to create with the object of bringing pressure to

bear upon the Authority. The subject provoked much discussion at the Authority, and in view of the constitution of the Authority and the peculiar feature of the business of the Port, there was some hesitation in formally claiming the monopoly of providing new accommodation below Barking ; but in their first report the Authority expressed the opinion that wherever practicable they should themselves undertake the provision of such further accommodation for shipping using the river as may from time to time be necessary, but they added that applications to construct works in connexion with business carried on at the premises, as distinct from shipping accommodation for the use of the public, would continue to be readily granted. Lest it might be considered that the Authority's attitude might have the effect of sterilizing enterprise in the class of river accommodation which had been advocated by many of the witnesses before the Royal Commission, the Authority took upon themselves the erection of accommodation of their own in the river at Tilbury. They sanctioned the construction of a deep water riverside jetty 1,000 feet long by 50 feet broad, with two decks providing 50,000 superficial feet of transit shed accommodation and railway connexions with the Tilbury Dock sidings. There will be never less than 30 feet of water at all states of the tide. The cranes will permit of delivery direct from the vessel to barges inside the jetty as well as to railway trucks on the jetty. The jetty will be available to all classes of vessels desiring to use it, but it is anticipated that its chief value will be to vessels discharging part of their cargoes in the Port. No better site or conditions are likely to be found for such a jetty, and it will offer the means of testing by experience to what extent riverside accommodation in the Thames is suitable for discharging or loading cargo in the case of ocean-going steamers in the Port of London.

Apart from labour, which is dealt with in another chapter, the above are the questions to which the Authority considered they were bound by the Port of London Act to devote most consideration before the outbreak of war in August, 1914. There were, however, other questions which may be mentioned indicating the scope and variety of the operations carried on in the Port.

First, the question of the headquarters of the Authority.



THE NEW HEADQUARTERS OF THE PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY IN TRINITY SQUARE

None of the buildings owned or occupied by the conservancy or the companies was suitable. The position of the largest office, viz., that belonging to the London and India Docks Company, at 109 Leadenhall Street, was convenient for merchants and shipowners, but it had proved too small for the Company, and there was no possibility of expansion for the much greater needs of the Authority. Pending other arrangements, these offices have been utilized for that portion of the establishment which is most closely connected with the management, whilst the rest of the headquarters staff are housed at various other buildings in the vicinity. The Crutched Friars Warehouse, taken over by the Authority from the London and India Docks Company, suggested itself as the nucleus of an ideal site for the purpose, and having obtained by the acquisition of adjacent properties, valuable frontages in Seething Lane, Crutched Friars, Trinity Square, and Savage Row, the Authority decided to erect a public building worthy of the site and fitting for its purpose. The professional services of Sir Aston Webb, R.A., were engaged to advise the Authority and to act as an assessor in an open competition for the design. 170 drawings were submitted, the successful competitor being Mr. Edwin Cooper, and the contract for the building was obtained by Messrs. Mowlem & Company. The building will occupy about one half of the site available, and about three-fifths of it will probably be required for the Authority's purposes. The remainder of the site will be let under a scheme of development.

Another question taken up at once by the Authority was that of through railway rates to the docks. As has been stated above, the Port of London Act had conferred upon the Authority the status of a railway company for this purpose, and it was hoped that the railway companies would no longer oppose the granting of through rates for dock traffic without the necessity of further litigation. Negotiations to this end were entered into by the Authority, but they proved fruitless, and there was therefore no alternative but to bring the matter to an issue by an application to the Railway Commissioners. The case was heard in 1912, when judgment was given by the Commissioners against the Authority, chiefly on the ground that any adjustment of the rates such as was sought by the Authority would have

involved the disturbance of the "group rate" system applied to the London district (including Tilbury), and would therefore be inimical to the convenience and advantage of London traders as a whole.

One of the complaints against the dock companies' administration had related to the delays in the movement of vessels to and from the entrances and their berths owing to the crowding of barges near the locks and in the fairway of the dock waters. The London and India Company had endeavoured to deal with the difficulty in their 1902 Act by placing upon the lightermen the obligation to enter and leave the docks without obstructing other traffic, but the remedy had failed. At certain docks it had been the practice to work the entrances during a limited period only at tide time, and no assistance was rendered to lightermen in docking and undocking the barges. With the object of accelerating the movement of the traffic, the Authority purchased several new powerful tugs. The Authority arranged that the dock entrances should be worked as long as possible each tide and that the Authority's staff should assist in marshalling barges there and render aid by tugs, capstans, and ropes whenever they are available. Other concessions were extended, including the free entry into the basins and docks of lightermen's tugs engaged in towing barges in and out of the dock. The dock dues on tugs and barges were equalized and the free time in dock extended. The principle underlying these arrangements was co-operation in the general interest of the Port instead of each of the parties standing strictly on his own rights, and the result, though involving the Authority in some annual expense, has proved to be of great general advantage to shipowners and traders.

Having regard to the strong opinions to which expression had been given for a period extending over many years, as to the necessity of relaxing the rules for licensing lightermen, the Authority considered that they should exercise the powers which had been conferred upon them by the Port of London Act. The governing provision of the statute laid down as an essential qualification for a licence or certificate, that the applicant should have served under a contract for two years with a person authorized to take apprentices in assisting to navigate craft on the river. The Authority

therefore decided to make a by-law to the effect that any person shall be deemed to be qualified for a lighterman's or waterman's licence if he has for a period of at least two years been engaged in working on a craft or boat in the Port of London. The Board of Trade held an inquiry through a committee who reported that in their opinion the by-law was reasonable and proper, and likely to prove beneficial to the community at large, including the mercantile community of London, the employers of labour in the Port, and the workmen in and about the Port. The by-law was accordingly approved by the Board of Trade.

The storage of petroleum and petroleum spirit in the Port of London is the largest in the kingdom. Petroleum is stored at various depots near the metropolitan area, but under the regulation of the Authority the storage of petroleum spirit is not allowed above Thames Haven. Soon after the Authority assumed office the representatives of the petroleum trade urged that the regulations were unduly onerous, and placed a serious and unnecessary burden in charges upon an article of daily increasing importance as an agent for locomotion and traction, and that Thames Haven was too distant and inaccessible from the London area for the main storage of such an article. The suggestions made included Purfleet as the limit, but some of the applicants demanded the abolition of any restriction of movement, leaving a vessel loaded with petrol spirit to proceed to any part of the river which its draught would allow it to reach. Representations were also made as to the necessity for an expansion of the facilities for transport by craft which were restricted to a capacity of 45,000 gallons (150 tons). In considering this question, the Authority learned that if vessels with petrol were allowed to proceed above Thames Haven the possible reduction in charges would not exceed one-sixteenth of a penny per gallon. The capacity of the tank vessels engaged in the trade had reached 12,000 tons, and the Authority came to the conclusion that the risk inseparable from the vessels laden with petrol in the narrower and more crowded parts of the river was such a serious one that they could not incur it consistently with a proper regard for the interests of shipping and of the many industries situated on the river banks. It was therefore decided to maintain Thames Haven as the limit for vessels

carrying low-flash petrol. It was, however, found possible to meet the traders on the question of the craft-carrying petrol. Though the capacity of such craft was limited to 45,000 gallons each, four being allowed to be towed together, the greater number of the craft licensed were much below the maximum capacity, and in practice only two craft were towed at the same time. The Authority decided that the limit of capacity might be raised to 75,000 gallons in the case of barges not propelled by their own motive power, and further, to grant licences for self-propelled tank craft protected against the effects of collision and with tank space sub-divided, of a total capacity not exceeding 150,000 gallons, the motive power to be internal combustion engines of a type in which ignition is effected otherwise than by any form of spark, flame, or hot tube.

In the course of the discussions on this question a suggestion was made to the Authority that they should acquire the whole of the oil storage in the Port, but it was not entertained. Though the storage of products was a business which the Authority carried on and was intended to carry on, the services required in connexion with petroleum and petrol storage included refining processes under factory conditions, and the Authority deemed the business one that was outside the scope of their powers.

The Port of London Act authorized the Authority to purchase by agreement the Crown interests in the revenue paid to the Commissioners of H.M. Woods and Forests in respect of one third of the revenues derived from licences granted for works and accommodation upon the shore of the Thames and an annual sum for sand and ballast removable from the bed of the river. Deeming the purchase to be a desirable one in the interest of the Port the Authority approached the Commissioners, and after protracted negotiations an arrangement was entered into by which the sum of £235,000 was paid in redemption of the annual payments.

Another financial operation was the extinction of the Millwall Equipment Company's rent charge at the Millwall Docks. This company had advanced the sum of £200,000 to the dock company for the purpose of erecting the Central Granary and other works, at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, with the proviso that the Dock Company could by notice pay off the capital at any time. With their better



SOMERSET HOUSE, ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AND BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE

From an engraving by W. Parrott

financial position the Authority were able to raise money on easier terms than the Dock Company, and at the earliest moment gave notice of repayment of the principal.

An important operation was involved in the purchase of the undertakings of the London Grain Elevator Company. Under an old agreement with the London and India Docks Company, the Elevator Company possessed the monopoly of discharging grain in that system of docks, and also occupied grain silos erected on the Victoria Dock premises. The extinction of the monopoly, which with the plant, was purchased for the sum of £80,104, has secured the Authority's freedom of action in dealing with the bulk grain trade in all the dock systems of the Authority, while the acquisition of the plant, which became available in all the docks of the Authority, with the addition of new plant subsequently purchased, has enabled the Authority to carry out the discharge of grain in a way which has put London in the very first rank for the rapid handling of grain cargoes.

In view of the desirability of the Authority ascertaining at first hand the needs and wishes of the colonies in connexion with the handling and storage of their products in the Port of London, the Authority in September, 1913, sent their commercial superintendent, Mr. J. H. Estill, on a commercial mission to Australia and New Zealand. Mr. Estill conferred with all the interests concerned at all the important centres of trade, and his programme embraced a series of lectures imparting information on the development of the Port, and the works in course of construction for immediate and future requirements. He also discussed the methods of shipment in the colonies and treatment at the ports of discharge with a view to ensuring colonial produce being put on the market in the best possible condition.

While the above account of transactions of the Authority refers to the larger matters upon which decisions of policy had to be taken, the regular weekly meetings of the Authority and the constant meetings of committees and sub-committees were mostly occupied with the routine of the multitude of daily current questions, the unremitting attention to which is the test of a Board's control of affairs and the ultimate test of efficiency and successful administration. No body of men have devoted more time or ability

from the beginning to the present moment to making the enterprise committed to their guidance one that shall fulfil the purpose to which it has been dedicated. The Authority has never been content to leave the superintendence of its operations to highly paid officials, but in every detail of business done, of works executed, and of the expenditure incurred have exercised a close and controlling supervision. In these conditions it is gratifying, though not surprising, in examining the results of the Authority's operations during the five years before the war to find that the business of the Port shows considerable expansion, whilst that of the docks shows even a greater proportionate progress. The following is a comparative statement of the business of the first and fifth years of the Authority's administration of the Port :—

| | 1909-10 | 1913-14 |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Tonnage of shipping entered and cleared (foreign and coastwise) .. | 35,151,799 | 40,080,282 |
| Tonnage paying Port tonnage dues .. | 28,579,648 | 30,816,381 |
| Tonnage of shipping using docks .. | 17,436,097 | 18,517,590 |
| Total value of goods imported and exported excluding coastwise .. | £322,614,363 | £411,792,149 |
| Tonnage of import goods handled at docks by Authority | 2,050,795 | 2,218,266 |
| Tonnage of export goods handled at docks by Authority | 640,869 | 823,865 |
| Tonnage of shipping using Authority's dry docks | 2,055,858 | 2,699,563 |

The following is a summary of the receipts and expenditure on revenue account for the same years :—

| | 1909-10 | 1913-14 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Earnings | £2,631,676 | £3,434,453 |
| Working expenses.. .. | 1,766,926 | 2,217,822 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Interest on Port Stock, etc. .. | £864,750 806,821 | £1,216,631 932,786 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Surplus Revenue | £57,929 | £283,845 |

Amounts totalling £152,650 had from time to time been charged to revenue on account of the special repairs to the dock premises mentioned above, and on the 31st March the reserve fund stood at £388,988. The financial position was therefore a perfectly well-established one, notwithstanding the large increase in the capital responsibilities of the Authority.

The above figures are the merest outline of the results of the Authority's business, and give no idea of its multiform character, and this chapter may well include a short description of the operations carried on by the Authority.

It may first be said that those operations differ from those of any other port authority in the world. In the United Kingdom the ports are governed in different ways, but few of the authorities do more than provide docks, quays, sheds, and cranes for the use of vessels, leaving shipowners to make their own arrangements for labour, while if warehousing facilities are afforded they are usually confined to grain and timber. Abroad, the State in many cases owns the dock premises, whilst local authorities or chambers of commerce administer the port and have the responsibility of erecting the accommodation above quay level. Few authorities are large employers of labour, Hamburg being the chief exception.

In London the Authority are only an authority in the true sense of the word, in its administration of the river. In the docks the Authority are simply the successors of dock companies, subject to all the limitations of competition by other interests in the Port. In some ways, the companies were less hampered in their operations by restrictions than the Authority are, owing to the special provision of the Port of London Act for the protection of the wharfingers.

The duties of the Authority in the river comprise the maintenance of the navigable channel by dredging and deepening, the regulation of traffic on the river, the licensing of all embankments, quays, and jetties on the river, the making and enforcement of by-laws in regard to explosives in the river, the raising of wrecks in the river, the purification of the river, and the licensing of lightermen and watermen. It may be said that in the river, excepting pilotage, police, and sanitary inspection, all the functions ordinarily pertaining to a port authority are applicable to the Port of London Authority.

In the docks the Authority own and offer to traders every class of dock and warehouse accommodation except storage for mineral oils or explosives. The whole length of the water area of the docks (except the shallow timber ponds of the Surrey Commercial system) is lined by quays and sheds where vessels may lie alongside and discharge or

load cargoes. Shed accommodation and cranes are to be found at every berth, suitable for the class of business which usually attaches itself to a particular department of the dock system. At the lower docks, shipowners can hire either by the week or for a longer term berths and sheds where they can discharge their vessels with their own labour, hiring cranes from the Authority as they require them. At the upper docks some berths are let in this way, but there the Authority has not changed the general policy of its predecessors, and for the most part, the work of discharging vessels is kept by the Authority in their own hands. The loading of vessels is almost invariably undertaken by stevedores in the employ of the shipowner, but the manipulation of export goods in the sheds is performed by the Authority's staff, who place goods for loading at the ship's side where they are put on board by the stevedores. The Authority supply tugs for towing vessels to and from the entrance locks. Besides the cranes on the quays used for loading or discharging cargoes, floating cranes for lifting heavy weights are maintained by the Authority, and the work of lifting is performed by their staff. In all the modern dock systems dry docks are provided by the Authority, thus saving the necessity of vessels having to go out into the river for this operation. The service of the Authority is confined to the provision of the dry docks, the pumping operations there, the placing of the vessel on the blocks, and the shoring of the vessel safely. The painting, cleaning, and repairing operations to the ship are performed by shipowners themselves or by their contractors. The Authority's docks are intended primarily for the ordinary cleaning and painting done between each voyage, and not for extensive repairs. The Authority have nothing to do with the coaling of vessels, which is seldom done from railway trucks, the coal being sent into the docks by barges and put in the bunkers by men employed by the shipowners.

The Authority is the greatest warehousekeeper in the world. The primary occupation of a warehousekeeper is that of providing safe custody for goods, but the Authority's operations range from the simple service of merely allowing goods the right of passage through its sheds, to the most complicated examination and manipulation of the valuable products of the East. Except at Tilbury Dock, which is a

transit dock only, there are warehousing establishments at all the docks, and in addition, the Authority possess Up-Town warehouses at Cutler Street in Houndsditch, and at the Commercial Road Dépôt. Generally speaking, the various classes of warehousing business are concentrated at the same department. Thus the wool business is carried on in contiguous floors at the London and St. Katharine Docks ; the tobacco business is at the Victoria Dock ; the rum and West India sugar business at its original home, the West India Dock ; whilst wine and brandy, which under the old monopolies were assigned to the London Dock, still remain there. The Surrey Commercial Dock is the only dépôt for soft wood, i.e., deals, boards, etc. Ostrich feathers, chinaware, Oriental carpets, and other articles of high value are kept at Cutler Street. The special sheds required for the handling and storage of hardwood are at the West India Dock. But there are other goods which it has been found convenient to store at more than one department. Thus grain is stored at the Millwall, Surrey Commercial and West India Docks. Meat at the Victoria and Albert Docks, West India Docks, Surrey Docks, and West Smithfield. Coffee at the London Dock and West India Dock, whilst tea is divided between the Cutler Street and Commercial Road warehouses.

Though the Authority and their predecessors have let a small percentage of their warehouse accommodation to tenants, at the rest of the accommodation all the services required by merchants are performed by the Authority's staff, who require years of training and experience to qualify them for the work they are called upon to undertake. The services rendered by the Authority include, besides the safe custody of the goods, all the operations required by the merchant in the course of the marketing, sale and delivery of his goods. These operations are often various and responsible. The catalogues issued by the brokers describing goods offered by them for sale are prepared from descriptions of the quality and condition, weight and other essential particulars required to be known by the buyer, furnished by the Authority's staff ; whilst the grading and lotting of goods in a way suitable for the market is also done on their advice. Samples to show indications of the bulk have to be drawn, and in such goods as rubber and fibres the judgment of the expert is necessary to

produce fair samples. The examination for damage to goods in order to ascertain liability as between the parties interested is another duty demanding not only skill but the strictest impartiality, and perpetually the Authority is placed in the position of arbitrator between buyer and seller. By the issue of the dock warrant to merchants, the Authority affords facilities for financing commercial operations, and by its arrangements with the fire insurance offices who superintend the design of all warehouses and inspect the work carried on from day to day with a view to a rigid adherence to regulations, aided by the vigilance of their own police, the Authority has been able to secure such a record immunity from fire as places the warehouses in the docks of London at the head of the record in this respect. The weighing and measuring of goods, the mending of imperfect packages by sewing or coopering, the separation of damaged from sound goods, and the making merchantable of salvaged goods, the vatting of wines and spirits, are amongst the operations carried on as part of the every day routine work in the warehouses. The services of the Authority as warehousekeepers are supplemented by that of carriers in that they undertake the collection and delivery of goods from and to the domicile of merchants and manufacturers, employing for this purpose railway, lighterage or cartage facilities enjoyed by them at their docks and depôts at the Commercial Road and East Smithfield goods stations. When required the Authority pass Customs entries for goods to be warehoused with them, and undertake all services performed by forwarding agents.

In respect of the whole of this warehousing business the Authority are in competition with the wharfingers on the riverside. No statutory monopoly of any sort has survived, but in regard to rum and tobacco and a few specially valuable articles, such as ivory and ostrich feathers, a practical monopoly has long been in existence.

The occasion of the retirement of the members of the Authority from office in the spring of 1913 afforded the opportunity for testing the state of public opinion as to the first four years' management of the Authority. All the retiring members were re-appointed or re-elected except Sir John McDougall, whose place as representative of the London County Council was filled by Mr. J. D. Gilbert.



'TEA BULKING

At the election of members by shipowners and traders, three candidates besides the retiring members presented themselves for election, but the poll was overwhelmingly in favour of the members.

The health of Mr. Robert Philipson, the general manager, gave way in the autumn of 1913 and he was obliged to retire in November of that year. He had shown much skill and capacity in dealing with the many questions connected with the inauguration of the Authority.

CHAPTER XXXII

The Watermen and Lightermen

FOR centuries the Thames was the principal highway through the metropolis for both men and goods. The silent water thoroughfare required no making and no maintenance. The two daily tides provided the opportunity of two return journeys of twenty miles each way with little exertion on the part of those navigating the small craft then in use. Till the rapid pace of steamships introduced a new factor of danger, the only serious hazard run by passengers was that of shooting London Bridge where the current created miniature rapids through the narrow arches, and this could be avoided by breaking the journey just above bridge and re-embarking at Billingsgate. Till docks were made, the custom was for vessels to discharge and load at moorings in the river, and very few vessels came alongside wharves at the Thames to discharge or load their cargoes. All goods had therefore to be conveyed to and from the ship and shore, and the ships' crews and the labourers engaged in working on the ship had to be rowed to and from their work. Lighters or barges (meaning the same) were used for goods. Boats of the larger type called wherries were employed for passengers. The men in charge of lighters were termed lightermen and those in charge of boats or wherries were called watermen.

This traffic must have dated from the very beginning of London as a port. It must have commenced with the ferry between early London and Southwark. It was obviously the method of business in the Port when Ethelred made his regulations for tolls at Billingsgate. The volume of the traffic in the river gradually became enormous and the London public who judge by the appearance of the Thames to-day with its deserted surface, except just before and after high tide, can have no conception of the constant activity of movement on the river both above and below London Bridge from Tudor times to the early decades of the nineteenth century.

The earliest records of organized traffic refer to the river



THE OPENING OF THE NEW LONDON BRIDGE (1st August, 1831)

From a drawing by A. Parsey

service between Gravesend and London called the "Long ferry" used by Continental travellers who came or went by road to Gravesend and completed their journey to and from London by boat in this service.

It is mentioned in 1293 that the boatmen on this route were in the habit of overcharging their passengers as appears from the following record :—"The jury presented unto the Justice of Assize that the boatmen of Gravesend, Milton, and London did take from passengers unjust fares against their will, that is where they had formerly taken a halfpenny from a person for his passage to London they then took one penny, whereof the Sheriff was directed to summon the parties. Then came several boatmen of Gravesend and they could not deny that they had taken one penny as charged, they were therefore in mercy, etc., and it was required of them they should take no more than one halfpenny and some of them gave a bond of 40s. for compliance with their sureties." A few years afterwards the fares were increased by authority to 2d. between Billingsgate and Gravesend.

From the thirteenth century onward contemporary records are full of incidents relating to traffic on the river, ceremonial, political, trading and domestic.

Thus we have in 1264 in the course of the rebellion King Henry III retreating into Kent and prevailing upon the authorities of the Cinque Ports to send a number of ships to block up the Thames to prevent the City receiving a supply of provisions. Queen Eleanor was safely protected by the Tower, but terrified by the commotion resolved to go to Windsor by water, but approaching London Bridge in her gilded barge, the populace assembled against her, intending to sink the barge as it shot the bridge. She was glad to accept the mayor's protection and was conveyed safely to St. Paul's.

Regulations made in 1370 indicate the growing importance of the watermen's traffic in the Port. It was laid down that no waterman was to take more than three passengers between London and Westminster, and that no waterman should leave his boat on the south side of the river but should have it moored on the city side to the end that "thieves and malefactors might not obtain possession" for incursions into the City. It was also ordered that all boats taking in loads of rushes, hay or straw should load only the moment before

their departure and that each boat bringing rushes to houses should pay twelve pence for cleansing the place where the barge was unloaded.

In 1422 we find an ordinance of the Common Council that the duty of destroying all weirs or kydells on the Thames should be carried out by the mayor with the members of each of the twenty-six companies and that they were all to perform this office. In the same year on the death of Henry V the sheriffs-elect were ordered not to ride on horseback to take charge at Westminster, but to go in barges with their companies, which were the Mercers and Drapers. The Brewers' Company have recorded the following notice of the King's funeral: "That William Walderne was chosen Mayor on St. Edmund's Day when it was ordered that the Aldermen and craft should go to Westminster with him to take his charge in barges without minstrels." Mr. Henry Humpherus, commenting on this incident, says that from this it might appear that the Mayor's procession to Westminster occurred earlier than 1454 when Sir John Norman is recorded to have proceeded by water. William Walderne's river journey may, however, have only been on account of the King's death. According to the chronicles of Alderman Fabian, the ancient custom of the Mayor riding to Westminster upon the morrow of St. Simon and St. Jude's Day on his presentation to the judges at Westminster was broken through by Sir John Norman who, having at his own expense built a noble barge, had it decorated with flags and streamers in which he was rowed by watermen with silver oars attended by such of the City companies as possessed barges in a splendid manner so that he "made the barge he sat in burn on the water." In the Harleian MSS the change in practice is described: "And this yere the riding to Wes' was foredone and goying thider by barge bigonne." As the number and splendour of the companies' barges and pageants increased, the Lord Mayor's River Show became the most attractive of City sights. The water processions were continued with few exceptions until the year 1856. The question of precedence in the water procession involved a feud between the Merchant Taylors' and Skinners' Companies for thirty years after Sir John Norman adopted the water route, one company's barge always attempting to get in front of the

others. On Lord Mayor's Day of 1483 it culminated in the rival companies coming to blows which resulted in bloodshed and loss of life. The Mayor, having been asked to arbitrate, decided that for the future the two guilds should alternately have precedence, and that each year on approaching Westminster they should lash their two barges together and drink as a toast : "The Merchant Taylors and Skinners : Skinners and Merchant Taylors : root and branch may they flourish for ever." The custom continued for many years.

A notable river pageant took place in 1487 on the occasion of the coronation of Elizabeth of York, Queen of Henry VII, on her coming forth from Greenwich, accompanied by the Countess of Richmond and many lords and ladies. Attending her were the Mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen of the City and members of the Common Council chosen from every craft in barges freshly furnished with banners and streamers of silk richly "beaton" with the arms and banners of their crafts. Especially prominent was the bachelor's barge garnished and apparelled "wherein was ordeynd a great redd dragon spouting flames of fyer into the Thames." Accompanied by the sounds of triumph clarions and other instruments, the Queen landed at the Tower. The bachelor's barge was appropriated to the younger sons of the nobility, a similar barge being devoted to the maids of honour. The City also possessed its bachelors' barge, the bachelors being chosen every year of the same company as the Mayor, and numbered from 60 to 100 young men.

None of the records of earlier days give any information as to the number of watermen and lightermen plying on the Thames. In 1471 Thomas Nevile, having collected a number of persons of desperate fortunes, endeavoured to surprise London, and having obtained possession of the Tower, he was able to collect enough boats to transfer 3,000 of his followers across the river from Southwark with the object of assaulting Aldgate and Bishopsgate. This incident indicates that by the end of the fifteenth century the number of watermen must have been considerable.

Tragedy went hand in hand with splendour in these Royal processions. Within a week Lady Jane Grey in July, 1553, had three river journeys. The first was on her way from

Sion House to fulfil the custom of the monarchs of England to spend the first few days of her reign at the Tower, being the first opportunity after the accession of showing herself to the people. The description of the event reports that a gallant train issued from Sion House and descended the stairs leading to the river, where appointed for their conveyance was drawn up a squadron of fifty superbly gilt barges, decorated with banners, cloth of gold, and arras embroidered with the devices of the civic companies, others with innumerable silken pennons to which were attached silver bells, while others reserved for the more important personages of the ceremony were covered on the sides with shields gorgeously emblazoned with the armorial bearings of the different noblemen composing the privy council, those of Lady Jane's father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland, being proudly conspicuous. Each barge was escorted by a light galley, termed a foist or wafter, manageable either by oar or sail and attached to its companion by a stout silk tow line. The Lady Jane embarked in a magnificent barge with two large banners beaten with the royal arms, planted on the foreship. Its sides were hung with metal escutcheons, alternately emblazoned with the cognizances of the Queen and her Consort, and its decks covered with the richest silks and tissues. It was attended by the bachelors' galley and the galley devoted to the maids of honour. In the galleys, besides the rowers and the men at arms, sat bands of minstrels provided with sackbuts, shalms, cornets, rebecs, and other instruments.

The conduct of the whole squadron was entrusted to six officers, who in small, swift wherries rowed rapidly from place to place, maintaining order by threats and commands, and keeping off the crowd of craft of all sorts hurrying towards the procession from every part of the river.

Within a week of this dazzling spectacle Queen Mary arrived at the Tower, Lady Jane Grey was made prisoner, but escaped, and on her second journey returned in a small waterman's boat to Sion House, where on the following day she was discovered, conveyed back to the Tower in the royal barge by torchlight, unattended and unnoticed—her last journey on the river on this earth. The Duke of Northumberland and his fellow conspirators were subsequently taken by barge from the Tower to Westminster

Hall, and after their conviction taken back to the Tower preparatory to their execution.

But sovereigns did not restrict the use of the river to State occasions. We read in 1552 : "The 13th day of Juin rod through London into the Towre Wharffe my lade mare (Mary) grace the Kynges sister and toke her barge to Grenewyche the Kynges courte and so cam agayn at 6 a'cloke at nyght and so landyd at the Towre and so unto Saynt John's beyond Smythfeld."

Again, "The 27th day of Juin the Kyngs majeste removed from Grenewyche by water unto Pottney and ther he toke ys horss unto Hamtun Courte."

The attempted arrest of Hampden and other members of the House of Commons for opposition to the arbitrary proceedings of Charles I in the levying of the ship money was the occasion of a great demonstration in the Port. On the escape of the members when the King's armed force endeavoured to arrest them they took shelter in the City. The King attended the next day, but the Court of Common Council refused to give them up. There was a suggestion that the accused members should in a triumphant military procession take their seats in the House, and a committee of members of the House of Commons and citizens met at the Guildhall and afterwards at the Grocer's Hall to concert measures for carrying out the arrangements. A thousand of the watermen and mariners in the Port, by petition, offered to conduct and protect the accused members by water to Westminster with proper arms and artillery. The offer was accepted, and on the 11th January, 1642, the committee, with Lord Kimbolton and the five accused members, took water at the Three Cranes Wharf with great naval state, attended by forty long boats manned by watermen and armed with small pieces of ordnance. The river was guarded by a hundred lighters besides boats many of them laden with small pieces of ordnance. These forces, together with the City trained bands which received them on the landing at Westminster, conducted the members to Westminster Hall.

When the reaction came the watermen were quite prepared to change sides with the rest of the country and welcome Charles II to the throne. The watermen attended at the bar of the House on the 31st January, 1660, with a

humble address of congratulation on the establishment of the free Parliament which was to restore the monarchy. In this connexion Pepys relates that two days afterwards he was talking to his waterman, White, "who told us how the watermen had lately been abused by some that had a desire to get in to be watermen to the State and had lately presented an address of nine or ten thousand hands to stand by this Parliament when it was only told them that it was a petition against hackney coaches, and that to-day they had put out another to undeceive the world and to clear themselves."

The two outstanding historical events which touch the imagination of Londoners are the Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire of the following year. The watermen were vitally affected by both of these events. The Plague banished the shipping trade out of the Pool, and as far as it could be done trade was kept out of the river altogether. Colliers were not allowed to come up above Deptford, and their cargoes were landed and piled in great heaps at Greenwich and Blackheath. The coal was fetched away after the colliers had sailed so that the sailors had no communication with bargemen. Defoe says that the watermen found means to convey themselves away up the river, many of them taking their families in their boats covered with tilts and furnished with straw, and thus lay along by the shore in the marshes, some of them setting up little tents with their sails and lying under them on shore during the day. The river sides were lined with boats as long as there was anything for the people to subsist on. Country people were active in relieving them, but by no means willing to take the refugees into their towns or houses.

The Fire of London broke out at the King's baker's house in Pudding Lane, a few doors from the river and adjoining the public warehouses in Thames Street. As Pepys relates, the great agents in the salvation of lives and property of the people were the carts and the fleet of lighters and boats put at the disposal of the City by the lightermen and watermen. Large quantities of property thrown into barges or into the river were rescued by the lightermen and watermen and taken across to Bankside. Pepys notes that there was hardly one lighter or boat in three, but there was a pair of virginals. Pepys himself put all his goods into a lighter and sent them to Deptford, where he had them well

watched. As it turned out, he might have saved himself the expense and trouble, as the fire spared his house in Seething Lane. The richer classes sent their furniture to houses some miles up the river in fear that the fire might extend to the Strand. The King sent most of his choice goods by water to Hampton Court.

For our last instance of the association of the watermen with historical events in England let us note that James II on his abdication made his escape, accompanied by Sir Edward Hall, in his own barge from Whitehall to Gravesend rowed by two watermen only. Four days afterwards he returned to London and slept at the Palace, but the Prince of Orange having arrived he was permitted to leave. The morning was wet and stormy, but a barge was brought to Whitehall Stairs, and he was rowed back to Gravesend, attended by a hundred Dutch soldiers, where he stayed the night on the way to France.

We leave outstanding incidents of life on the river such as are given in these instances to deal with the development of water transport as an industry on the river. Its growing and continued importance is shown by numerous statutes and regulations to be found in the records of the last four centuries. Before the year 1514 the workers on the river were nominally controlled by the Corporation of London. But the conditions were not conducive to an effective control. The nature of the work spread the industrial members over a wide area, not so easily patrolled as the streets of the City. The work was irregular, dependent upon favourable winds, not only in the high seas, but in the river itself. It was hard, dangerous, and dirty. There was much temptation to plunder sugar, tobacco, and wine when in bulk with little chance of its being missed. The occupation appealed therefore to the shiftless, the reckless, and the lawless. The good features in it were the fresh-air surroundings and a healthy occupation, making for strong men. There was also a certain sense of comradeship acquired amongst those who worked on it. Such men when disciplined made the very finest material for sea fighting, and from the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards we find records of the impressment of watermen and lightermen for the Navy.

The earliest Act of Parliament dealing with the watermen was passed in 1514. It was designed to suppress the abuses

of extortionate demands from persons wanting boats for journeys on the river or for ferrying across it. The Act recites the charges which had been customary for the services rendered, and enacts that they shall be strictly observed in future. The maximum remuneration for a waterman's services was fixed at 6d. a day, without meat or drink unless the trip was as far as Greenwich or Mortlake, in which case the figure was raised to 8d. Watermen or bargemen demanding more were to be subject to a fine equal to three times the fare refused, and to other pains and penalties if remaining contumacious.

The first Act passed for controlling the industry on an organized basis was in 1555, viz., that of Chapter 16 of the 2nd and 3rd Philip and Mary. The Act details the reasons why legislation had become urgent. Divers and many misfortunes and mischances had happened on the river (so it recites) to the nobility and common people through the ignorance and unskilfulness of the watermen. Many boys "of small age and little skill out of the rule and obedience of any honest master and governor do for the most part of their time use dicing and carding and other unlawful games to the great and evil of other such like." Such persons when wanted by the press commission for the Navy were not to be found, hiding in the country, practising robberies and felonies, and returned when peace returned, to their former trade of rowing, and, owing to their being unskilful and lack of exercise, were the cause of grave accidents by which some persons lost their goods while others were drowned. Complaint is also registered in the Act as to the construction of the boats, it being stated that they were straight and narrow in the bottom and were so "shallow and tickle" that great peril and danger of drowning had many times ensued. The reform prescribed by the Act for the evils was as follows :—

The Corporation of London were annually to appoint eight of the "most wise discreet and best sort of watermen being householders to be called the overseers and rulers of all the wherry-men and watermen that from and after the 1st March shall use occupy or exercise any rowing upon the said river of Thames between Greenwich and Windsor." The qualification for a waterman was that he should have been used in rowing upon the Thames for the space of two

whole years, and no boat or wherry could take passengers except by a man holding a licence from the overseers and rulers that he possessed this qualification. If two men were rowing in one vessel it was to be sufficient that one of them was qualified. Any man offending this rule subjected himself to a month's imprisonment by the order of the overseers and rulers. A similar penalty awaited anyone even rowing between Gravesend and Windsor unless they were apprentices or under yearly engagement to a master. For the protection of the workmen, the Corporation had power to revise sentences passed by the rulers, and even to "punish correct and reform" the overseers and rulers themselves in cases where they had acted unjustly. The minimum measurements of wherries or boats to be used for the conveyance of passengers were fixed at twenty feet six inches for length and four feet six inches broad amidships, and the vessels were to be "substantially and well able and sufficient to carry two persons on one side tight according to the old quantity, scantling thickness of board, goodness and good proportion heretofore had and used." Any boats made contrary to this regulation were to be forfeited.

The principal and probably the only real object of the measure appears in the sections referring to impressment of men for the Navy. If watermen and lightermen voluntarily and obstinately withdrew, or hid themselves, when the press was in force into secret places and out corners and when it was over came back to their work, then they were to be imprisoned for two weeks and banished from the Thames for a year and a day afterwards. The overseers and rulers were to keep a register of every man they licensed and to inspect periodically the craft rowed by them. The fares to be charged for passengers were to be fixed by the Corporation subject to endorsement by the Privy Council.

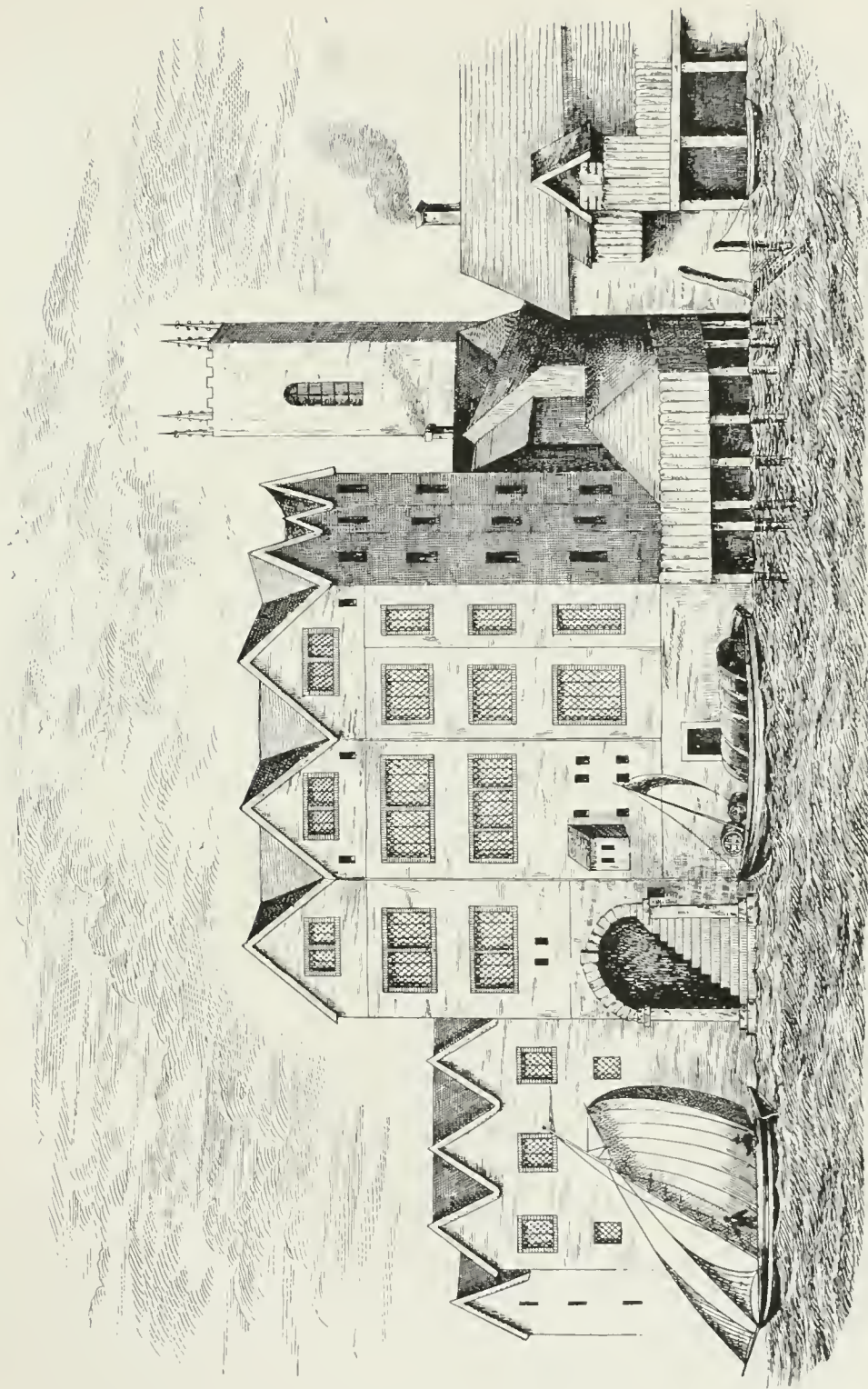
It will be observed that the legislation is confined to craft employed for the conveyance of passengers ; no provisions were made for the protection of property either in regard to its safe handling or the price to be charged for services rendered.

Within two years Queen Mary was at war with France, in the course of which Calais was lost to the English crown,

and the first use of the 1555 Act was made in the impressment of Thames watermen to man the English Fleet, an emergency measure to be re-employed in every succeeding war till the abolition of the press gang in the nineteenth century. The impressment was the frequent cause of grievance amongst the men, and the rulers were often challenged as to their unfair use of the law. The impressment made in 1708 excited great discontent. The rulers appear to have been allowed 8s. per head for each man they procured for the service, and they were charged with having avoided service themselves, though they were the youngest and stoutest fellows in the company, and even with accepting bribes to let men off after they had been impressed.

Though no records appear to this effect, there seems to be little doubt that the occasion of the passing of the 1555 Act was taken to form the guild which became the Watermen's Company, and that membership was at first confined to the men rowing boats and wherries carrying passengers. The Company is referred to in the Act of 1603, and it then had a hall, the locality of which is unknown. This Act of 1603 was the first step taken by the watermen and lightermen to make their trade a close corporation on the Thames. It provided that no waterman or wherryman transporting any passengers or goods in any wherries, tilt boats, or barges should take any servant or apprentice to serve him on the river unless he should himself have been an apprentice to a wherryman or waterman by the space of five years before such taking. Apprentices were not to be less than 18 years of age, and were to be bound for at least seven years under a penalty of ten pounds for every offence. The retention of the privileges in certain families was favoured by an exception to the Act in favour of the sons of watermen who, if trained in rowing, could be admitted to apprenticeship at the age of 16. It is to be noted that under the first charter of the East India Company granted in 1600 their watermen were exempted from impressment.

The cause of this effort to establish a monopoly is probably connected with one of those changes in forms of transport which periodically lead to the displacement of apparently permanent forms. The coach was superseding the horse for the transport of people from place to place.



Watermen's Hall 1647

Not every one could afford to hire a horse, and many could not ride one, hence the convenience of the boat or wherry as a means of locomotion in London ; but driving in a carriage, even in the indifferent streets, was practicable for the infirm, whilst one horse could draw four people instead of carrying only one. Queen Mary at her coronation in 1553 was the first to make the new departure by driving in a chariot ; her sister and Ann of Cleves were in another, and two other chariots were in the procession. Coaches were introduced into England in 1565 by Boonen, a Dutchman, who presented one to Queen Elizabeth, and she used it when she went to St. Paul's Cathedral in 1588 to return thanks for the deliverance of her kingdom from the Spanish Armada. "And after awhile divers great ladies with as great jealousie of the Queen's displeasure made them coaches and rid in them up and down the countries to the great admiration of all the beholders, but then by little and little they grew usual among the nobilitie and others of sort." By the year 1600 the number of coaches, private and public, had so increased that the narrow streets were often blocked with them, and in the next year a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons and passed by them "to restrain the excessive and superfluous use of coaches," but the House of Lords rejected it. For the next hundred years the history of the watermen was chiefly one continuous agitation and struggle against its powerful rival, which not only diverted traffic from the river to the land route, but reduced the fares of passengers, and threatened the existence of the watermen as a class. In 1614 a Bill was brought into the House of Commons, entitled : "A Bill against outrageous coaches," and was rejected by the House.

The water poet, Taylor, took up the cause of the watermen in his work, "An Errant Thiefe," published in 1622. In it he says :—

Carroches coaches jades and Flanders mares
Do rob us of our shares, our wares our fares
Against the ground we stand and knock our heels
Whilst all our profit runs away on wheels
And whosoever but observes and notes
The great increase of coaches and of boats
Shall find their number more than e'er they were
By half and more, within these thirty years
Then watermen at sea had service still

And those that stayed at home had worke at will
 Then up start hel-cart coaches were to seek
 A man could scarce see twenty in a week
 But now I think a man may dayly see
 More than the wherry on the Thames can be.

Three years later, when London was visited by one of the plague epidemics, Taylor made another moan on behalf of the industry in his work "The fearfull Summer," viz. :—

The very watermen gave over plying
 Their rowing trade doth fail, they fell to dying.

In 1633 the watermen scored by an order from the Star Chamber. "As to a complaint of the stoppage of the streets by the carriages of persons frequenting the playhouse of the Blackfriars, their lordships remembering that there is an easy passage by water into that playhouse without troubling the streets and that it is much more fit and reasonable that those which go thither should go by water or else on foot do order all coaches to leave as soon as they have set down and not return till the play is over nor return further than the west end of St. Paul's Churchyard or Fleet Conduit, coachmen disobeying these orders to be committed to Newgate or Ludgate." But next year they had a set-back by the establishment of hackney carriages. Permission was obtained for such carriages plying in the streets, and a stand was formed at the Maypole in the Strand near Somerset House. The watermen were up in arms again and petitioned to the King, informing His Majesty "that the Hackney coaches are so many in number that they pester and incumber the streets of London and Westminster and which is worst of all, they stand and ply in Term time at the Temple Gate and at other places in the streets and do carry sometimes three men for four pence the man or four men for twelvecence to Westminster or back again, which doing of this doth undoe the Company of Watermen." This petition had the result of bringing out a proclamation denouncing hackney coaches for so pestering the streets and breaking up the pavements that the thoroughfares were made dangerous and hay and provender was made dear, and forbidding any hackney coaches in London or Westminster except those travelling three miles out of town, and no person was allowed to use a coach in

the streets unless the owner would constantly keep four horses available for the King's service. The poet Taylor, who had spent himself and £34 of his money in securing this edict in favour of the watermen, appealed to them for reimbursement, but only succeeded in obtaining £19 from a collection made on his behalf with shameless suggestions from some of the watermen that he had fraudulently asked for more than he had spent. The public would not stand the edict, and the triumph of the watermen was short-lived. Two years afterwards, in 1637, the proclamation was practically withdrawn by the issuing of an order for the licensing of fifty hackney coaches, "finding it very requisite for our nobility and gentry as well as for foreign Ambassadors strangers and others." The troubles which were rising between Charles and his people gradually dwarfed any such question as coach versus wherry, but the adherence of the aristocracy to the King's cause meant the loss of the most valuable patrons of the coach. Cromwell, however, had no sentiment for monopoly, even a working-class monopoly, and in 1652 his officials increased the number of licences of hackney coaches to two hundred. When next year the watermen presented a petition to the House of Commons against coaches, Cromwell replied by issuing an ordinance raising the number to three hundred. Cromwell possibly had in mind the petition which the watermen had presented to the House of Commons in July, 1648. This petition was correct in form, but it begged the House to invite the King to London with honour, freedom, and safety, and breathed a Royalist atmosphere throughout. Charles II in the first few months of his reign, being complaisant to all of his subjects, and particularly appreciative of the maritime section of them, who had so much aided his restoration, issued a proclamation against the hire of hackney carriages in the streets, but it appears to have had no effect, and probably was never intended to be enforced. Before the close of Charles's reign the number was by statute increased to four hundred. The ineffective struggle continued till 1694, when an Act was passed raising the number of coaches to seven hundred and appointing commissioners to regulate them. The coach had won its claim to traffic in London as a competitor of the wherry, and the position had to be accepted by the wherrymen. Meanwhile foreign

trade had been expanding, and what business had been lost in conveying passengers was made up in carrying cargo. An amusing incident of the competition occurred when, in the intense frost of the early weeks of 1684, the coach successfully competed with the wherry on its own element by plying on the ice-covered river from the Temple to Westminster, whilst large boats were used as sledges to carry passengers drawn by horses or watermen.

While the overseers and rulers of the watermen were united in the long fight against coaches, there was going on an internal struggle between the rulers (the word ruler was ultimately adopted as the most convenient for the double title of the governing body) and the men, and there are constant instances of friction between these two constituent classes of the Watermen's Company, covering a long period. The democratic principles which developed in the nation, as the Puritan principles were extended by the success of the Parliamentary army, took a firmer hold in London than anywhere, and with the watermen these principles found their chief expression in February, 1641, when they petitioned the Corporation asking that the rulers to be appointed by the Corporation under the 1555 Act should be selected by the watermen themselves, and as a matter of form only to comply with the Act, that the election should afterwards be confirmed by the Corporation. The Corporation referred the question to a committee, who as a compromise suggested that the watermen who plied at the stairs between Gravesend and Windsor, fifty-five in number, "being of the most honest and sufficientest watermen," should select twenty of the "most able and best sort of watermen," and that in the appointment of the eight rulers the Corporation should consider these twenty candidates as well as any others submitted to them for consideration. The suggestion appears to have been adopted, and the candidates so nominated at the Stairs appear, when appointed as rulers, to have gradually assumed the title of Assistants and Court of Assistants. But the causes of friction were not removed by the concession. Scandalous charges were circulated against the rulers, thereby so exciting the hostility of the watermen that when a Bill was promoted for amending the regulations governing the Company, agitators threatened to raise many thousands of

watermen to attend the Parliamentary Committee to oppose the proceedings and to cut the petitioners in pieces, "as Dr. Lambe was murdered in St. Paul's Churchyard though protected by the Royal troops." One of them boasted that during the Parliament then sitting they were free from all government. The rulers appealed to the House for protection—vainly apparently, for the Bill did not pass.

The year 1667 found the watermen at variance with the lightermen. The lightermen, as well as the watermen, appear to have had a Livery Company of their own, though little is certain on the subject. The difficulties appear to have arisen owing to the lightermen invading the business of the watermen by carrying passengers as well as goods. The disputes were brought before the King in Council, and the Mayor and Aldermen were asked to reconcile the differences or else to report what steps should be taken in the public interest. The negotiations between the parties went on for six years, at the end of which time the Corporation, having been unable to bring the parties together, reported in favour of the union of the watermen and lightermen into one company. This was strongly opposed by the rulers of the watermen, and the dispute was not settled till 1700. Meanwhile a diversion was created by the demands of the watermen for an investigation into their own company's accounts, and a committee of the Corporation, after sitting for sixty-four days on the question, reported that they had examined the books of the Company from 1667 to 1673 and found them very ill-kept, "by means whereof we have found it very difficult and troublesome besides the expense of a great deal of time to discover what money was received and paid within the aforesaid time," and further that neither is there "any plaine entry made of what money was from time to time taken out of the box," but the committee arrived at the conclusion that "several sums of money have been taken away by the persons undermentioned to the injury of the whole Company and especially to the poore thereof who ought to have been relieved out of those moneys." The money taken amounted to about £100 in the three years previously, and according to the rulers concerned they were, on the advice of the clerk, entitled to it as a perquisite attached to their office, the clerk himself taking a share. The committee

could not find the slightest colour for such a pretence nor for many other things that had been done by the rulers during the same time, and they recommended that the rulers should refund the moneys taken and that auditors should in future supervise the accounts of the Company. A year afterwards some of the rulers were still recalcitrant and had not made the refund, nor does it appear on the record that they ever did.

At this period any successful move of the men was always immediately arrested by some untoward circumstance. On this occasion the blow came by the stoppage of Sunday work on the river. This measure had first been contemplated in 1641, when the Puritan idea of Sunday observance was gaining power ; but though a Bill to restrain bargemen, lightermen, and others from labouring and working "on the Lord's day commonly called ' Sunday ' passed through the Commons, it did not survive the Lords. But in 1677 Parliament passed an Act forbidding anyone to use, employ, or travel upon the Lord's day with any boat, wherry, lighter, or barge except it be on an extraordinary occasion to be allowed by some Justice of the Peace of the county, city, or borough where the act should be committed, upon pain that every person offending should forfeit five shillings for each offence.

Whether the law was enforced in the time of the Merry Monarch does not emerge in contemporary history, but it can be imagined that the rigidity of James II's compliance with religious observance was reflected in his zealous officials' carrying out the law strictly. When his daughter Mary came to the throne she emphasized her views on the subject by issuing an order in council requiring the rulers to stop the working of watermen on Sundays. The rulers confessed themselves unable of their own authority to secure obedience, and in June, 1693, they petitioned the Mayor to appoint constables to attend at the river stairs every Sunday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to assist them in the performance of their duty, alleging that troublesome and disorderly persons at the plying places were endangering their lives. The result of the application is not known. The question remained one of contention until 1700, when with other questions it was settled by the Act of Parliament passed during that year.

This Act of 1700 was one of the most important events in the history of the watermen, as it marked the union of the lightermen and the watermen—a union much to the advantage of the watermen, for while their industry was a failing one, that of the lightermen was a growing one. It was also designed to benefit the public by bringing the lightermen under public control. The Act began by enacting that all lightermen or owners of lighters working between Gravesend and Windsor should be deemed to be members of the Watermen's Company. The qualification for working a barge, wherry, or boat should be service as an apprentice to a waterman in accordance with the statute of 1555. The owners or occupiers of the quays between London Bridge and Hermitage Bridge at Wapping might use their own craft if rowed by qualified men. Woodmongers keeping wharves for the retailing of fuel might themselves row their craft, or if employing men for this purpose the men must be qualified men. A similar concession was extended to owners of lay stalls carrying soil to vessels. Any other men working on the river were to be subject to a penalty of £5 for each offence. Three working lightermen were to be appointed rulers, bringing the total number of rulers up to eleven. The rulers were to appoint forty or not more than sixty watermen as assistants. The lightermen were to appoint nine of the assistants. Five watermen and two lightermen were to be appointed as auditors. The court might therefore consist of eighty-seven persons. As in the Act of 1855 the appointment of rulers lay with the Corporation. The assistants, though appointed by election machinery ostensibly democratic, were in reality indirectly appointed by the rulers, but as their functions were purely advisory it made no difference. Public opinion then favoured a strong control of the men's monopoly.

The Act endeavoured to settle the question of Sunday plying for hire. It is clear that previous legislation to stop Sunday traffic on the river had been abortive. The Act recites that great numbers of idle and loose boys worked on Sunday and exacted excessive fares from passengers "whose necessary occasions oblige them to pass and repass the river of Thames and generally spend such their gains in drunkenness and profaneness the succeeding week."

Suppression of the traffic appearing to be impossible, the ingenious design was adopted of utilizing the energies of the watermen working on Sundays in aid of the cause of charity for their own class. The Act therefore authorized the rulers to allow forty watermen to ply and work on Sundays between Vauxhall and Limehouse for the purpose of ferrying people across the river at one penny each, such watermen paying their receipts to the Company on the Mondays and receiving for the Sunday work the ordinary daily pay due to them, the overplus being applied to the poor, aged, decayed, and maimed watermen and lightermen and their widows. The scheme appears to have been an adaptation of the arrangement already in operation at Westminster, where the watermen at the ferry originally established for conveying the Archbishop of Canterbury across the river to Lambeth plied on Sundays for the benefit of the necessitous of their class.

We have now arrived at the end of the seventeenth century. The eighteenth century was a period of comparative calm in the history of the watermen. The peaceful policy of Walpole during the first quarter of that century has already been referred to as developing foreign trade, and the rest of the century, owing to the success of the more aggressive policy of his successors, was characterized by even more signal developments. The prosperous condition of trade in London brought occupation to both lightermen and watermen, and fully compensated for the injury done by the extension of land conveyances. No other new inventions yet threatened the industry. Hence, though we have petty internal disputes and quarrels arising in the affairs of the Watermen's Company, we find a more harmonious relationship subsisting everywhere in the Port. Such happy times, as the proverb teaches us, make little history.

Had any waterman or lighterman been able to foresee at the close of the eighteenth century the changes which invention and progressive ideas were likely to bring within thirty years, he would have prophesied not only disaster, but the extinction of his trade. In those years roads were improved, new bridges across the Thames were built, the shipping trade accommodation was revolutionized by the construction of the docks, and steam-power was applied to the propulsion of both vessels on the sea and locomotives



PICTURE OF THE FROZEN THAMES, 1814
From a contemporary print in the Guildhall Library

on land. The construction of bridges rendered the ferry unnecessary. The opening of the docks was avowedly made with the object of avoiding the lighterage service, and so saving the pillage that went on owing to the facilities to thieves while craft were in the river. Steam-power in the river offered quicker transit than man-power. Steam-power on the railroad offered even greater speed still, with less dangerous travelling. Every one of these events was to the prejudice of the man who rowed his craft on the Thames, and besides, the industry suffered the cumulative disadvantage that instead of being, as in the case of the coach competition, a single rival slowly advancing in power, giving time to the river industry to readjust itself to new conditions, these new factors presented themselves almost at the same time, and with sudden and apparently overwhelming expansion. The lightermen and their masters saw all the possibilities of the new threats of competition as they rose up one after another, and resisted every one of them, especially the construction of the docks. Yet, though temporary losses occurred by diversion of business, the gigantic impulse to trade, aided by the inventions and facilities which had threatened river traffic, soon provided a huge development of business which required the lightermen's services in the Port. The original waterman's occupation has practically gone, never to return, but his transfer into the ever-expanding trade of the lighterage of goods has been accomplished without injury to himself, and he has even had the satisfaction of witnessing the disappearance of the passenger steamer which ousted him.

The history of the watermen and lightermen since the beginning of the nineteenth century has centred round the attacks on their privileges. The privileges received a new recognition in the Act of 1827, which consolidated the powers given under several old Acts. The Company was incorporated under the title of "The Master Wardens and Commonalty of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames." Twenty-six members of the Company were appointed by name as the first members of the newly constituted Company, Francis Theodore Hay being the master. Vacancies on the Court were to be filled by the nomination of three freemen by the Court, the final selection being left to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City. Freemen must have

rowed and worked on the Thames as an apprentice of a freeman or his widow for seven years. Apprentices were to be between 14 and 18 years old, and no firm could have more than four. No one but freemen were to work any craft for hire on the Thames. Passenger boats were to be specially licensed. The Court were to have power to make by-laws for good government of the freemen and apprentices, including the power to punish offenders. In the interest of the public the fares for passengers were to be fixed by the Mayor and Aldermen. The Sunday ferry arrangements were confirmed. Provision was made for the ringing of bells at Billingsgate at high water and at Gravesend at low water for fifteen minutes to give notice of the starting of the ferry boat to and from Gravesend. Persons not freemen were not allowed to carry goods for hire.

The first amendment of these powers came in 1859. The Act then passed removed the previous legal incapacity of boats other than those belonging to freemen to carry goods for hire, but required that all barges so employed should be registered with the Company. The provisions as to the qualification of watermen or lightermen were modified by this Act. No person was to be allowed to act in either of these capacities unless he was a freeman of the Company or an apprentice duly qualified and licensed. Freedom of the Company was to be obtained by an apprenticeship of at least five years to a freeman or freeman's widow or to a registered barge-owner employing a freeman. Registered owners of barges were also to be deemed qualified to be admitted as freemen. Every man employed had to receive a licence as well as being qualified as freeman of the Company. The master of an apprentice might obtain a licence for him to take sole charge of a vessel if the apprentice had worked and rowed upon the river for two years and passed an examination by the Court of Watermen.

An Act passed in 1864 still further diluted the old reservoir of watermen. It extended the privileged class to "contract service men," that is men above 20 years of age who had not passed through the apprenticeship, but had served a master authorized to take apprentices and had assisted him in navigating a lighter or steamboat. A man

who had fulfilled those conditions could obtain from the Watermen's Company a certificate authorizing him to act as a lighterman or to work or navigate a steamboat.

In the Thames Conservancy Act of 1894 further exceptions were made to the strict rule laid down by the Act of 1827. Lighters passing from beyond one limit of the Port to beyond the other, i.e., from Teddington to below Gravesend, need not be freemen or licensed men. Lighters navigating the Grand Junction Canal and passing from or to the Thames and not navigating up and down the river, and lighters navigated from above Teddington Lock as far as London Bridge were equally free from the Watermen's Company jurisdiction. Under by-laws made by the conservators under the same Act they stipulated that any lighter when under way in the river should have one "competent man" constantly on board in the case of lighters up to fifty tons, with an additional man in the case of lighters up to 150 tons, and a second additional man for lighters exceeding 150 tons. Interpretation of this by-law by police magistrates defined the first competent persons as a freeman of the Watermen's Company, but that the second or third hands need only be physically competent.

It will be seen that the attempt to break down the men's monopoly was only leading to complications in the law and practice which were defeating the object in view. This aspect of the case appealed to the Thames Traffic Committee (a Departmental Committee of the Board of Trade appointed in 1879 following upon the *Princess Alice* disaster in the Thames in 1878), who pointed out that the law was full of ambiguities and led to singular anomalies. If, for example, a steamer plied between Southend and London Bridge she was not obliged to employ licensed watermen. If she were transferred to a service from Woolwich to London Bridge her owners were bound to employ in her navigation men licensed by the Watermen's Company. The same conditions prevailed in the case of a sailing barge working from the Medway to London and then transferred to the river above Gravesend. This Committee were in favour of clearing away ambiguities by sweeping away the privileges of watermen and leaving the responsibility of the selection of employees on the river to employers under the same conditions as apply to all other employment. They

express the common-sense of the situation in the following extract from their report :—

Considering the great difficulty of establishing a satisfactory examination, considering that the western barges and the sailing barges requiring at least equal skill are admirably navigated by men who are simply selected for the purpose by their owners and are not required to pass any examinations, considering also that the best way of securing good and skilful service is in general to throw the responsibility on the employer and to leave him perfectly free to select whom he pleases, we are not disposed to recommend any test examination or preliminary proof of qualification. We are confirmed in our opinion by the practice on other rivers, namely the Clyde, the Mersey and the Tyne. The physical and other features of those rivers differ from those of the Thames but in all of them skill and experience are required and on none of them is there any monopoly or any attempt made to ascertain the qualifications of the men employed on the navigation by previous examination. On all these rivers the results appear to be satisfactory. We are informed by Captain Moodie that at New York also where there is an immense and well conducted barge traffic, the business of the bargemen is perfectly free. We recommend therefore that the navigation of barges on the river be thrown open entirely, leaving the men employed in it subject to penalties in case of misconduct or breach of byelaws and the owners liable also to civil damages in case of injury.

Though not going quite so far as this Departmental Committee, a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1890 recommended that steps should be taken to render the Watermen's Company a less close corporation, that the examination for a lighterman's licence should be more strict than at present, and that any person should be eligible for a lighterman's licence if found on examination to possess the necessary qualification. No action was taken to convert either of these suggestions into law, but following upon the prolonged lighterage strike of 1900, the master lightermen promoted a Bill to enable them to employ upon their barges any man that they might choose. The Bill was supported by shipowners, merchants, and brokers who had suffered by the strike. As the Royal Commission was then sitting, the Bill was referred to the Commission, and as their report shows, they adopted the view of the Committee of 1879 and recommended that the industry should be thrown open to all workers. In the passing of the Port of London Act the Government had so many contentious questions of principle to dispose of that they only attempted to touch the

lighterage question with a light hand, and the Act merely gave the Authority general power to vary the by-laws relating to the licensing of watermen and lightermen, but restricted them from granting licences to any person who had not been engaged for at least two years in working on a craft or boat in the Port of London. The action taken by the Port Authority since their appointment is mentioned in the chapter describing their share in the history of the Port. So far as the main objects of the Thames Traffic Commission of 1879 and the Royal Commission are concerned, the position remains practically where it was. The enormous increase in the amount of traffic handled in the river and the knowledge that it must still further increase as London grows, with the maintenance of the peculiar licensing system of watermen, leaves the workers untouched by influences tending to make them serve the Port to the best of their ability save such as may be derived from their own inner consciousness or from the precept and example of their leaders. No other community of workers in Great Britain is so protected. In such circumstances the temptation to use the privileges for their own advantage against the community is obvious. By the strike of 1900 they held up all water conveyance for three months, and in 1912 they were the backbone of the long strike of that year. Although both of these strikes were unsuccessful, they caused enormous inconvenience to the public and put at risk the future of the trade of the Port. The power to do much mischief still remains, and if it should be again employed to hold up the Port, either for selfish reasons or even out of sympathy with other workers, it is hardly to be doubted that the public will insist upon the abolition of this virtual monopoly as it has from time to time abolished other monopolies which have proved hurtful to the commonwealth.

The Long Ferry has already been referred to. The name of Long Ferry was given in contra-distinction of the short ferry between Gravesend and Tilbury. It is contended by Cruden that the hythe at Milton Gravesend mentioned in Domesday as of twenty shillings in value with three servants was the place where London passengers landed or embarked was the landing and embarking place for the ferry. Though the ferry was evidently in existence in 1294, it is not till 1364 that there is any specific record of it. In that

year the farming of the ferriage produced twenty shillings a year. The ballad of London Lackpenny, written in the early part of the fifteenth century, thus describes the scene between the poor traveller desiring to go into Kent and the waterman :—

Then hyed I me to Belynges Gate
And one cryed "Hoo go we hence"
I prayed a bargeman, for God's sake
That he would spare me my expence
"Thou stepst not here" quoth he "under II pence"
I lyst not yet bestow my alms dede
Thus lacking money I could not spede.

The most interesting document regarding this ancient water passage is the Royal grant in 1401 to the men of Gravesend of the right of the ferry. The grant relates that "from time to time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary, the men of the Town of Gravesend" had been accustomed to carry in their own vessels persons desiring to go by water to London, and that certain persons of London had recently been engaged in diverting the traffic to their own vessels to the injury of the Gravesend men. The document grants "as much as in Us is, to them who now inhabit the town aforesaid and to their heirs and successors whomsoever, that they, in their own vessels may for ever freely ship such persons coming to the said town of Gravesend and willing to go thence to our said city of London by water, taking for every such person as in times past shall have been duly used and accustomed."

The grant was confirmed by succeeding monarchs. In 1562 Gravesend received its first charter of incorporation. By this charter it appears that the ferry traffic had diminished, due to the lesser traffic to the Continent and probably also to the inefficiency of the service. Matters must have improved by 1573, as we find that the owners of the barges were authorized by the Corporation to appoint seven tiltboats to take turns as auxiliaries to the barges used in the service. The tiltboats of smart build were propelled by sails instead of oars, and moreover carried an awning for protection against the weather. They were originally intended for "serving the nobilitie and worshipfull and their attendants." The interests of the barge owners were protected by a stipulation that the fare for the journey was fixed at sixpence, out of which the ordinary fare of twopence had to be

paid to the owner of the barge taking the corresponding trip. The tiltboats were not allowed to transport goods traffic. Thirty passengers were the maximum number allowed. The superior speed and other attractions of the tiltboats soon threatened the existence of the barges, and in 1595 the Corporation of Gravesend persuaded the Corporation of London to agree to a set of regulations intended to protect the owners of the barges. The principal regulation forbade any tiltboat or wherry plying for passengers until the Gravesend barge was full of passengers and had started on its voyage. This protection did not, however, save the barge from extinction. In spite of legal proceedings intended to drive the tiltboat off the river, its superiority was recognized by the public. The Gravesend Corporation took over the management of the barges, and the tiltboats were accepted by the Corporation as legitimate carriers on the Thames. No barge of the heavy type for this traffic appears to have been built after 1639. For some years before 1737 a change in the construction of the tiltboat had been made. In place of the awning, close decks had been provided, and this had led to accidents involving danger and loss of life. In 1737 an Act was passed forbidding the use of close decks or fixed bails (the name given to the hoops upon which the tilt was supported). Competition gradually improved the character of the fittings of the craft. We find in 1789 Mr. John Dominy advertising in this service the *Princess Royal* as "fitted up in an elegant manner for the reception of genteel and creditable people only, which will sail to-morrow at six o'clock and continue sailing during the season at 1s. per passenger. The master to be spoken with at the Darkhouse and Gun Tavern, Thames Street. It is Mr. Dominy's fixed resolution to carry no hop pickers or people going a harvesting on any account whatever."

At the end of December, 1816, there were twenty-six sailing boats employed in the Long Ferry service, varying in size between 22 to 45 tons, besides several decked boats which carried fish and passengers. But the knell of this ancient sailing craft service had already been rung. In the previous year the first steamboat between London and Gravesend, the *Margery*, had commenced to run. Instead of being tidal, the new steamboat service was to run at the appointed hour of 10 o'clock each alternate day from London

and Gravesend. The steamboat service did not at first prove a success. Interruptions continually took place through breakdowns of machinery and the working expenses were heavy, but the end was inevitable, and in 1834 the last of the tiltboats, the *Duke of York*, was withdrawn. On one of them, the *King George No. 1*, Cruden pathetically remarks that "stripped of her wings she lies a hulk at the Hole Haven as a depot for lobsters awaiting the demand of the London market."

The steamboat traffic on the Thames, as is related in another chapter, was immensely in favour with the public, and as cordially detested by those handling dumb craft in the river for commercial purposes. Steamboats were to a great extent displaced by the railways running eastward of London along the Kent and Essex shores, which were made between 1830 and 1840, and to-day such has been the effect of the change of public habit that no river service of any kind exists between London and Gravesend. The public with fuller purses journey by train to Tilbury, and embarking upon sumptuously decorated steamers, seek fresher breezes in the estuary of their river, with Clacton, Yarmouth, or Ramsgate as their goal. Gravesend and Rosherville have ceased to be the scene of the Londoner's holiday, and not even the restricted user of sea excursions due to the war led to even a temporary restoration to favour.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The Public Wharfingers

THE public wharfingers in the Port of London to-day are the lineal descendants of the men who first provided the wharves and warehouses on the Thames side for the landing and warehousing of the goods brought in by ships trading in the Port and for the shipment of goods exported from the Port. Passengers could embark or disembark in boats plying between vessels anchored in the stream and the causeways or stairs running down the slopes of the riverside from the firm land of the City, but for such operations as the landing of wine or the shipment of wool, wharves with shelter against weather and with powerful machinery for the lifting of goods to and from the vessels and craft were absolutely necessary. Such wharves also offered, as they do to this day, facilities for examination of the goods for the assessment of Customs duties. In the earliest times at Billingsgate and at Queenhithe there was accommodation for ships alongside to discharge and load their cargoes, but for the most part, vessels lay in the stream below London Bridge in the upper Pool and delivered or received their cargoes by means of barges. There seems to be little doubt that the first wharves, except at Billingsgate and Queenhithe, were erected by individual merchants or shipowners for the convenience of their own trade and that the system under which public wharfingers were established was a development subsequent to the privately owned institution. Such a development would naturally begin by a merchant finding his own accommodation more than he wanted and taking in a lodger. Then experience probably indicated the benefit of the co-operation of several merchants utilizing one quay, or of a trade concentrating its business at one depot. The latter reason probably prevailed in the case of the Easterlings, who for centuries had their own premises at Dowgate. Then came the idea of employing trustworthy agents or contractors to render the Port services required, and thus was established the business of public wharfingers, who for a consideration

let their wharves be used for the purpose of landing or shipping off the goods of the public, charging a sum per ton known as "wharfage." In the course of time, wharfingers also became public warehousekeepers, accepting the responsibility of the custody of goods in warehouses attached to the wharves. It is clear that until the middle of the eighteenth century the wharfage and warehousing services were almost always performed under different controls. The chief reason for this distinction is to be found in the fact that in respect of the duties then payable on entering the country the wharves were the places where it was convenient that Customs revenue should be appraised and collected. This fact entailed the wharves being privileged institutions. The warehouses remained for a much longer period the property of the merchant. The East India Company's warehouses are the outstanding example of privately owned warehousing establishments. Ten acres of land in the City of London were covered by their storehouses which were in their possession at the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. The existing Cutler Street warehouse of the Port of London Authority, built about 1782, is the last survivor of this gigantic warehouse system. Even to-day a few large firms of merchant importers own or rent their own warehouses in preference to entrusting their produce to the management of the Port of London Authority or the public wharfingers. The chief motive is economy, but this method can only be cheaper in the case of the very largest firms doing a regular business, and it is a question whether the interests of buyers or consumers are thereby so well safeguarded.

The first legislation dealing with the wharfingers is that contained in an Act of Parliament passed in the first year of Elizabeth's reign. This was a general Act dealing with London, Southampton, Bristol, West Chester (Chester), Newcastle, and all other ports (Hull excepted) where the Customs had been represented for ten years previously. The Act begins by lamenting the decrease in the revenue derived from the Customs, attributing the decrease to "greedy persons" smuggling, and the corruption of the Customs officers as compared with the times since Edward III. The Act then lays down that goods are only to be loaded or discharged in daylight (fish excepted), and then only upon



CUTLER STREET WAREHOUSE

"some such open place, key or wharf" as may be appointed by the Queen. Amongst other provisions is one that shipowners are to be required to give due notice when they were leaving ports and to lodge manifests of the inward and outward cargoes, and another that only the owners were to pass entries of goods at the Custom House. The Commissioners entrusted by the Queen to carry out the Act appointed the following wharves in London, known as "legal quays," for the purposes of the Act, viz. :—

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Old Wool Quay | Somers Quay |
| New Wool Quay | Botolph Wharf |
| Galley Quay | Sabs Quay |
| Andrew Morris's Quay | Young's Quay |
| Ambrose Thurston Quay | Crown Quay |
| Raufts Quay | Smart's Quay |
| Cocks Quay | Fresh Wharf |
| Dyce Quay | Gaunts Quay |
| Bear Quay | |

All these quays were situated between London Bridge and the Tower of London on the north side of the river. The total length of river frontage occupied by them was about 1,100 feet. Many of the names were those of the owners of the premises, and were accordingly changed from time to time. The only names that survive to the present time are Galley Quay, Botolph Wharf, and Fresh Wharf. The position of these quays had been fixed by experience to be the most convenient for trade. The north side of the river was nearer the City warehouses, and being east of London Bridge avoided the perilous passage of cargo through the bridge.

The advance in the trade of the Port during the next hundred years led to demands for additional quay space, and in the year 1663 an Act was passed empowering the King by commission to define the limits of the Port of London and to appoint "Keys wharffs or places for landing and discharging goods and prohibiting the landing and discharging of boats, lighters, ships or vessels elsewhere without the sufferance and permission of the Commissioners of Customs." It was two years before the King's Commissioners settled the appointed quays. The following

is a list, and it will be seen that not many were added to the existing quays, viz. :—

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Brewers Quay | Ralphs Quay |
| Chesters Quay | Dyce Quay |
| Galley Quay | Smart's Quay |
| Wool Quay | Somers Quay |
| Custom House Quay | Lyons Quay |
| Porters Quay | Botolph Wharf |
| Bear Quay | Hammonds Quay |
| Sabs Quay | Gaunts Quay |
| Wiggans Quay | Cocks Quay |
| Youngs Quay | Fresh Wharf |

All of the additional legal quays authorized were, as in the case of those authorized in 1559, situated on the north side of the river between London Bridge and the Tower. The name of the Brewers Quay is another which has lasted till to-day. Bear Quay got its name from Bear Lane. Galley Quay was naturally the name of the wharf where were discharged the galleys that brought wine from Genoa. Stow relates that the Galley sailors had certain silver coins called Galley halfpence, the circulation of which was forbidden by Acts passed in the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V. and that persons bringing into the realm "suskinges or dodkins," i.e., little sous or doits, were to be punished as thieves. At Wool Wharf a building was used for the tronage or weighing of wools in the Port of London. Somers Quay took its name from its owner dwelling there, as did Lyons Quay, with its sign of a lion. Botolph Wharf, known formerly as Botolphs Gate, is close to the parish church of St. Botolph, and is one of the earliest mentioned of wharves. Its grant to the Abbot of Westminster by Edward the Confessor was confirmed by William the Conqueror.

The position of these wharves fixed the position of the markets for the sale of the goods, hence the establishment of the markets for the sale of imported produce in Mark Lane and Mincing Lane, a position which they still occupy to-day. Mark Lane was originally Mart Lane. Mincing Lane, once Mincheon Lane—from the Minchuns or Nuns of St. Helens, Bishopsgate, who lived there—became a favourite quarter for lodging foreign merchants and sailors arriving in the Port of London, including the galley men above referred to. Eastcheap is another name which has survived, indicating the presence of a market.

Thirty-one of the Commissioners signed the deed of appointment of these quays, including Lord Clarendon, the Lord High Chancellor ; Lord Southampton, the Lord High Treasurer ; Lord Arlington, and Lord Ashley.

These quays, thus appointed as legal quays, were the only places recognized as the landing and shipping-off places of goods arriving or leaving by sea, the primary object of the restriction being the security of the Customs revenue. But there were at this time many other quays on the river above London Bridge connected with warehouses where goods, both imported and home-produced, were stored. Some of them may be indicated. The Steelyard, long the chief depot of the Easterlings, and already referred to, was the principal warehouse. Large stocks of steel and iron were kept here and in 1708 a contemporary guide-book says that it was a "prodigious market" for such goods. Further west were the warehouses and vaults of the vintners, where Bordeaux wines were stored and sold. Then came Queenhithe, the City market for corn for many years. Salt wharf was the place where salt was discharged, measured, and sold. At Timber Hithe, timber was landed and stored. Brooks Wharf and Broken Wharf were existing in Stow's time, and both survive till to-day. Broken Wharf was then in disrepair, hence its name. Stow also describes Paul's Wharf and Puddle Wharf, whose names survive, the latter, like Queenhithe, possessing an open dock. There do not appear to have been any wharves or warehouses on the south side of the Thames when Stow wrote his Survey of London at the end of the sixteenth century. All warehouses above London Bridge were filled with every description of goods. Many of them were far from substantial constructions, wood being the principal material used in their construction. The erection of buildings was not controlled by any authority. Insurance companies did not exist and did not exercise the salutary check which they exercise now in the separation of risks.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when the Great Fire broke out in Pudding Lane on the 2nd September, 1666, and was fanned westward by a gentle east wind, the character of the warehouses, buildings, and their contents was the principal contributory cause of the immensity of the conflagration and devastation. The effect of that fire so far as

the Port was concerned was to destroy in three days virtually the whole of the accommodation for landing and storing goods, and the whole of the goods in the warehouses. Fortunately the community did not then depend upon imported food. Were such an event possible in the twentieth century, when London is fed from the sea, the disaster would be dire and almost irremediable, but the distribution of fire risks in the great stores of foreign produce, under the advice of the insurance companies, is now so systematically arranged that any fire in the Port can be limited to the section of the building in which it commences.

In the report of the Commissioners appointed under the Act of 1663, the measurements of the space at each wharf to be licensed are laid down. There was a uniform width of quay provided for of forty feet. The frontage of each wharf is given as follows, viz. :—

| | <i>Length of frontage in feet.</i> | | | |
|---------------------------|--|----|----|-------------------|
| Brewers Quay | .. | .. | .. | 73 |
| Chesters Quay | .. | .. | .. | 51 |
| Galley Quay | .. | .. | .. | 101 |
| Wool Dock | .. | .. | .. | 61 |
| Custom House Quay | .. | .. | .. | 202 |
| Porters Quay | .. | .. | .. | 103 |
| Bears Quay | .. | .. | .. | 62 |
| Sabs Dock | .. | .. | .. | 30 |
| Wiggans Quay | .. | .. | .. | 52 |
| Ralphs Quay | .. | .. | .. | 81 |
| Dyce Quay | .. | .. | .. | 111 |
| Smart's Quay | .. | .. | .. | 27 |
| Somers Quay | .. | .. | .. | 73 |
| Lion Quay | .. | .. | .. | 37 |
| Botolph Quay | .. | .. | .. | 78 |
| Hammonds Quay | .. | .. | .. | 23 |
| Gaunts Quay | .. | .. | .. | 31 |
| Cocks Quay | .. | .. | .. | 41 |
| Fresh Wharf | .. | .. | .. | 140 |
| Billingsgate Dock | .. | .. | .. | 172 |
| Total | .. | .. | .. | <hr/> 1,549 <hr/> |

The river stairs which divided these wharves were not allowed to be used for the landing or shipping of goods.

On the south side of the river, the Commissioners allowed corn for the City to be landed at Bridge House. Another exception to the regulations was sanctioned by



GALLEY QUAY. LOWER THAMES STREET

the Commissioners, viz., that between London and Woolwich, horses, coal, beer, stone, fish, and corn might be loaded direct into any ship in the river, provided Customs officers were in attendance, and, further, that timber could be discharged in the river between Westminster and Limehouse Dock, provided the owner first paid the duty, and that Customs officers were in attendance. A special sufferance or permission was required for this privilege, hence the name of sufferance wharves, which was later applied to such wharves as were to be allowed by the Commissioners of Customs to deal with the overflow of traffic from other wharves. In the case of coal and other goods to which the special sufferance privileges were first accorded, the arrangement was doubtless made because of the inability of the legal quays to deal with any large quantity of bulky traffic.

The Commissioners took the opportunity of imposing other conditions upon the owners of the legal quays intended to facilitate the transit of goods and the avoidance of congestion. Thus, crane houses were not to be more than 12 feet in breadth for single cranes, and 20 feet for double cranes, with a depth in either case of not more than 20 feet. The floor of the crane house was to be at least 10 feet 6 inches above the ground so that carts could pass under it. The cartways leading to the quays were to be at least 11 feet wide. As the river walls of the quays were not of uniform height, the Commissioners recommended that they should be brought up to five feet above high water mark, some of them then being only three feet above the mark and that the gradients of the streets should be lowered to make the drawing of loads more easy. But the records do not show whether these sensible recommendations were carried out.

Quay or key is a term often loosely employed as an alternative for wharf, but it would appear that quays were then places dedicated primarily for the discharge and loading of ships and hoys. Wharves were limited to the passing over of goods to and from barges.

The term dock was applied to small open harbours cut into the land. Of these docks Billingsgate was for centuries the principal one in the Port both as regards size and the business carried on. The fish trade became so important at this dock that an Act was passed in 1699 for making

Billingsgate a free market for the sale of fish. Vessels with salt fish using the dock paid 8d. per day groundage, or 20d. for the voyage. Lobster boats with fresh sea fish and every Dogger Bank boat with sea fish paid 2d. and 13d. respectively. At the head of the dock was a square plot of land compassed with posts known as Roomland which, with an adjacent part of the street was the usual place where shipmasters, coal merchants, woodmongers, lightermen and labourers met for the marketing of coal. Execution Dock between Wapping New Stairs and King Edwards Stairs was the place where pirates were hung in chains ; St. Katharine Dock was the landing place for the monastery dedicated to that saint ; Puddle Dock and Queenhithe Dock in Upper Thames Street, exist to-day much in their ancient design ; St. Saviour's Dock on the South side of the Thames was formed from a sheltered creek for the convenience of small ships. Other docks were Sabs Dock already mentioned, Dowgate Dock, Wapping Dock, Ratcliff Dock, and Limehouse Dock in the districts which they are named after. Savorys Dock near Shad Thames, Scotland Dock at Whitehall easily identified with Scotland Yard, Tower Dock at the Tower, and Whitefriars Dock, complete the list.

Of the facilities given to traders at these quays up to the end of the eighteenth century it must be said that they were of a primitive character even for times when steam or hydraulic machinery had not been thought of. No vessel could lie alongside any quay afloat for the whole period of the tidal flow. The quays were generally uncovered and unless goods could be removed as they were landed, were exposed not only to the effects of heat and cold and wet, but to the depredations of the army of thieves that haunted the river. The trucking of goods was apparently not practised, probably because of the rough surface of the quays or streets. Goods which could not be carried by a man on his back were slung on poles resting on the shoulders of two men. Most of the goods appear to have arrived in barrels which could be rolled over the quay to the conveyance. Though complaint was evoked by the leisurely and expensive methods of doing business the chief grievances of the merchants were directed rather to the exorbitant charges made than to the inefficient services. In 1674 there were disputes between the owners of the legal

quays and the merchants as to their charges, and it was referred to the Court of Aldermen to settle the rates for the services rendered on the quays. Schedules were submitted by both the parties. The wharf owners claimed that the rates were moderate and took credit for their not having been increased after the great fire, when such calamitous losses were sustained. The merchants answered that they had been raised 50 per cent. in 1650, and they considered that the increase of trade since the Fire had afforded the wharfingers an ample recompense for their losses. The Aldermen came to no decision. Possibly the City's interest in the wharves led them to favour them rather than the merchants. In 1705 the merchants again brought pressure to obtain relief against the exactions of the wharfingers, and applied to Parliament in January of that year. Their petition complained that the proprietors of the legal quays had created a monopoly by entering into a combination "or co-partnership to make them all one joint concern which, if continued, the burthens and losses trade will be subject to by this co-partnership will be intolerable." One result of the monopoly complained of in this petition was that ships were twice as long in discharging in consequence of the number of lighters in attendance for cargo having been reduced, one lighter only doing the business of three under the previous arrangements. Again, rates of wharfage and rents of warehouses on the wharfs had been advanced and there was no limit to further advances. Further, and this was considered the most intolerable grievance, when by the negligence of their servants, lighters were sunk and goods lost, or when goods were stolen from the lighters or warehouses, merchants knew not from whom to obtain reparation, having no certain knowledge of the persons concerned as no deeds of partnership were enrolled in the Courts of Record, and therefore they were "left without remedy unless by the great charge and delay of a suit in Equity in order to every action that your petitioners may have occasion to commence at law to recover their damages."

Parliament appointed a committee to deal with the petition. It met several times but made no report. During the 1705 session while the committee were sitting, attention was drawn to a section in the Act for rebuilding London after the Fire which appears to have been overlooked. This

section required wharfingers to publish schedules of their charges and gave merchants a right of action against wharfingers who might demand exorbitant charges. The merchants thereupon stopped further proceedings before Parliament and decided to enter upon an inquiry of what had been done to give effect to this section. Here the matter evidently dropped for the time being, a merchant who wrote in the last decade of the century guessing with some probability of accuracy that further action was stayed by some palliating measures of the wharfingers. It may be guessed further from what occurs in modern times that conditions of trade may have meanwhile so improved that merchants may have felt able to pass the heavy charges on to the consumer with perhaps something added. However this may be, it is clear that as the eighteenth century advanced and trade advanced with it, the wharfingers became more and more masters of the situation. As an instance of this, there is a notice sent out to merchants in November, 1756, by the proprietors of the legal quays. These gentlemen coolly told their merchant customers that they did not admit that sugar which they lightered from ships in the river to their quay was in their charge, and that to prevent disputes for the future they gave notice that they would not accept liability for any loss or damage which might happen to goods put into their lighters, and that only on those terms would they consent to perform the service of lighterage.

The granting of sufferance privileges by the Crown to wharves outside the favoured territory between London Bridge and the Tower was of little benefit to merchants and in no way tended to correct the ill-effects of the monopoly. The sufferance grant was of too spasmodic and uncertain a nature to tempt the capitalist to erect new wharves. Such wharves would in any case start with a geographical disability and with the handicap that carmen and lightermen had vested interests in the legal quays, where the conditions of congestion and chaos provided opportunities for plunder. And then there was the certainty that the legal quays were strong and unscrupulous enough to freeze out any undertaking which threatened their monopoly.

At the end of the eighteenth century the merchants, with the shipowners, at last succeeded in gaining the ear of



OLD WOOL WAREHOUSE AT BERMONDSEY

Parliament on this and other scandals of the Port and secured reforms that ended the autocratic reign of the legal quays and established a revolution in port management and facilities. This is recorded in another chapter. It may, however, be convenient here to summarize the case against the legal quays as it was put to the public in 1705, and as it remained for the next hundred years.

1. The limitation of landing and shipping off of merchandise to the legal quays between London Bridge and the Tower brought about congestion, and although relief was given by the granting of sufferance privileges, this entailed an additional charge on the merchant, who was also obliged to fee the Customs officer who attended at the sufferance wharves. Such officers, in order to enhance their gratuities, knew how to bring about delays and to let the goods lie in the craft, giving opportunity for innumerable thefts.

2. The lack of space at the legal quays was attended not only by impositions in the rates for wharfage and lighterage, but with many difficulties, delays, and inconveniences. Thus, when goods were waiting on the quays to be shipped, the loaded lighters with import goods were obliged to lie by until the quays were cleared. Ships were frequently stopped in their working for want of lighters. The blocking of the quays led to constant quarrels amongst the labourers, "raising such clamour that if the property of the ground itself were in question it could not be contended for with more heat and animosity." Another grievance resulted from the fact that many of the wharfingers were owners of lighters and gave a preference at the quays to goods carried in their own lighters. These wharfingers were accused of paying wages lower than the standard wage, knowing that the men would compensate themselves either by plundering the goods or by insisting on bribes from merchants before they would carry out their duties. Again, great inconvenience arose from the landing of goods belonging to different merchants at one spot at one and the same time, especially in regard to wine and fruit. It was a common practice for ships lying alongside one another to be discharged simultaneously, and in such case the goods were rolled from ship to ship or carried on men's backs to the landing place, resulting in the goods of every ship lying on the quay

mixed and undistinguished, for two or three days at a time. The wharfingers laid the blame upon the merchant for not removing his goods, and the merchant retailed upon the wharfinger for confounding his goods with others. The true cause of the disputes—the noise and the confusion—was attributed to the want of room, and it was urged that unless this cause was removed all reform would be baffled.

3. The existence of the monopoly of accommodation was perhaps the greatest grievance of the merchants. They pointed out that this monopoly had been retained in a great measure by the representations made after the Great Fire of the great losses then sustained and of the extraordinary expense of rebuilding the accommodation. But any sacrifices made had long been liquidated, and the merchants pertinently observed that as they were confined to the narrow bounds of the legal quays it was absolutely necessary that the wharfingers should have bounds to their rates. The charge of combination of ownership was emphasized. It was alleged that the majority of the wharfingers had for many years been united by partnership under one joint interest and direction, and that they commanded the renewal of every lease, regardless of cost. This provided the inevitable excuse that high rents must be supported by high rates—a policy carried out so thoroughly that not only wharf and warehouse rates were continually raised, but also rates for lighterage. It was estimated that the rates at the legal quays were double those in force at other wharves. Yet so strong was their position as the holders of exclusive rights that they could enforce their exactions without fear of losing their business.

4. The merchants supported their case by pointing to the outports, where, as trade increased, the wharf limits had been extended at the request of the merchants. The Crown had never denied any application there, nor had the merchants been opposed by any private interest. It was stated that in the last seventeen years of the reign of Charles II no less than forty-eight extensions of public wharves in the kingdom outside of the Port of London had been granted. In the reign of William and Mary the public wharves at Bristol had been established, and there were 4,000 feet of public wharves there as against 1,400 feet in London.

Falmouth and Plymouth had recently had extensions of wharves granted to them. Arguing from these precedents and from the greatly increased trade of the previous fifty years, the merchants contended that none but wharfingers could desire any proof of the necessity of enlarging the authorized public quays in London. They lamented the case of London when they considered what it had lost by trade being forced out of its channel into the outports, "all owing to the acts of a few wharfingers for their own private interest suffered to increase by slow steps and degrees, too much unattended to by those whose business it was and who might long ago have prevented it. The merchant no doubt will seek and prefer that port where he can carry on his trade with the best economy, ease and dispatch and not where his accounts must be loaded with exactions and impositions and his thoughts disturbed with loss and delay, and therefore it is not to be wondered at that the outports have flourished and increased at the expense or loss of the mother city."

Old as it is, the doctrine laid down in this last sentence as to the policy which should govern the management of a port is as sound to-day as it was in the circumstances of the year 1705, and it is worthy of observance by all employers and employed who are concerned in the welfare of the Port of London.

The establishment of the great dock systems at the beginning of the eighteenth century was an immense upheaval in the Port and vitally prejudiced the interests of the legal quays. In the five years beginning with the opening of the West India Docks in 1802, the principal trades of the Port were compulsorily transferred from their existing spheres of operation to the West India Docks, the London Dock, and the East India Dock. Instead of lying in the stream, the vessels concerned in these trades were taken into the particular docks assigned to them, and their merchandise was landed there. Thus the wharves which had received sugar, rum, logwood, ginger, pimento, brandy, and wine—and they were the majority of the wharves—lost the whole of the businesses of landing and warehousing these goods. East India produce, which had been landed at various wharves on its way to the Up-town warehouses of the East India Company, was now landed at the East India

Docks and carted to Town. No more drastic change was ever made in the working of a port, before or since. The business that was left to the wharfingers of those days was the coastwise trade with corn, hemp, flax, fruit, and hides from foreign ports. The taking over of the wharves by the Government doubtless sweetened the loss of business and prestige to the wharves concerned. The removal of the congestion caused by the transfer of so much traffic to the docks must have been as beneficial to the new tenants of the legal quays in the cost of manipulation as it was to the merchant, in the dispatch given to the restricted quantity of goods which were allowed to pass over the quays.

The monopolies accorded to the docks were in force for twenty-one years from the date of opening of the respective docks. During that time the trade of the Port grew substantially, and the wharves, in their favoured position so near the heart of London, received their share of imports not tied by law to the docks.

The cessation of the dock privileges did not at once benefit the wharves. The convenience of dock accommodation for the valuable produce housed there was too obvious to tempt away merchants, many of whom still had memories of their sufferings under the monopolist régime of the legal quays. Moreover, the merchants themselves were managing the docks whilst they and their relatives were shareholders. The only loosening of connexion was in the direction of warehousing goods at the new St. Katharine Dock. Even when the East India Company went out of direct trade and sold its immense City establishments, the wharfingers made no bid for the warehousing of East India produce. The City warehouses were bought up by the dock companies between them, and tea, indigo, and silk, which had been housed there for nearly a century, remained there.

But in the middle of the nineteenth century a movement began for the erection of riverside wharves of modern construction equal in accommodation to those at the docks and owned by substantial firms whose warrants were good enough for bankers to accept as security for advances to merchants. They were aided by the lack of energy on the part of the dock institutions, who, trusting in their old prestige, were inclining to the conservative views towards

modern ideas of accommodation which had marked the wharf institutions which they had displaced. Dock management was bound to become largely impersonal as the result of the vastness of their undertakings, whilst the more compact wharf establishments had the inestimable benefit of being managed by their owners. The conditions of trade had changed. The West India trade was no longer so large, relatively to other trades. The Free Trade policy of the Government had not only affected the character of sea-going trades using the Port of London, but by removing the duties on many descriptions of merchandise had made it practicable for many wharves and warehouses to carry on business which Customs regulations had confined to the docks, and, moreover, a more liberal policy was adopted by the State towards new ventures desiring to accommodate the continual advancement in the volume of trade. The position of the wharfingers was strengthened by the sections in the Dock Acts which exempted their barges from charges and by the fact that the remunerative part of dock business was the warehousing of goods which enabled the wharfingers to undercut them and yet make a good profit. As is pointed out elsewhere, it was the pressure upon the dock undertakings by the diversion of trade to the up-river wharves which led the companies to the unsuccessful request to Parliament in 1855 to sanction charges on barges taking away goods from the docks. The later developments of the relationship of the wharfingers with the dock undertakings are dealt with in the chapter "London and India Docks Joint Committee."

It remains only to refer to the enormous accommodation which private enterprise has provided and maintained on the riverside for the needs of the Port during the last fifty years, accommodation which in many cases could not have been so conveniently provided in the docks. The facilities so undertaken are a standing answer to the criticism often passed upon the Port by those who do not know, that the great asset that it possesses in its river banks is not adequately utilized. From Blackfriars to Shadwell the river is lined on both sides with public wharves and warehouses. Their chief purpose is the warehousing of goods, and they share with the dock warehouses, about equally, in giving storage to the enormous entrepot trade of London. They

also serve, as they did originally, in the useful purpose of providing for the landing and shipping off of cargo imported or exported in ships lying in the river. Some of these wharves also give accommodation for the discharge of ships alongside, and both sides of the river in the Pool are busy scenes. Thus at Hay's Wharf an establishment equal to the St. Katharine Dock in the floor space devoted to warehousing, vessels with provisions discharge regularly in the proximity of the provision market in Tooley Street. At Fresh Wharf, on the north side of the river, vessels with fruit find it convenient to unload their cargoes because of the fruit market in Pudding Lane. A little further down on the same side of the river the large fleet of steamers owned by the General Steam Navigation Company use the St. Katharine and Irongate Wharves belonging to the Company. The Carron Line to Edinburgh finds its London home still further eastward. The Morocco vessels of the Royal Mail Company are to be found at Morocco Wharf at Wapping. On the south side of the river are two very important wharf properties ; one, Mark Brown's and Davis Wharf, just above the Tower Bridge, has a thoroughly modern equipment for discharging the medium-sized vessels that can reach this part of the river ; and the other, Bellamy's Wharf, opposite the Shadwell entrance of the London Dock, not only undertakes to discharge and load ordinary cargoes, but has modern installations for the discharge of grain, besides storing the grain and other cargo. To the eastward of Bellamy's Wharf are situated most of the riverside granaries. Immediately below Shadwell we get few public wharves of any importance. The riparian interest becomes one of dry docks and manufactories of every class, many of the latter, such as those of Messrs. Tate, Messrs. Lyle, and Messrs. Knight at Silvertown, being of the highest national importance and of world-wide reputation. In this neighbourhood begin the wharves devoted to the discharge of coal for bunkering, for gas factories, and for private consumption. The coal trade is the largest individual trade in tonnage in the Port, the quantity of fuel arriving by sea in the Port of London during 1912 being 8,159,000 tons. The line of continuous wharves may be said to come to an end at Plumstead, a distance of nine miles from London Bridge, but beyond



MARK BROWN'S WHARF

Plumstead at intervals, other developments of port accommodation besides coal are to be found in the wharves of the cement and margarine factories and timber yards. An unique series of facilities for the landing and shipment of coal and other goods are afforded at the wharf called Dagenham Dock, belonging to S. Williams & Son, Limited. Not only do they give direct rail facilities for goods landed and shipped, but as owners of a large tract of land adjoining the wharf, they are able to let sites for factories with the enormous benefit of combining rail, road, and water access. Of great and growing importance are the installations for the discharge and storage of petrol and other liquid fuels, which are situated at Purfleet and Thames Haven.

Though up to the end of the eighteenth century the public wharfingers owning the legal quays were a close corporation, their successors were long afterwards individualistic in their relations with the public and each other, but in recent years they have, commencing with their association with the dock companies, found advantage in common action, and recently they have formed a Wharfingers' Association for the furtherance of their interests and as an official body authorized to speak for them. Parliament has so far recognized the vital connexion of the public wharfingers with the Port that in the Port of London Act it gave them one representative on the Authority. In the appointment of the first Authority in 1909 the Board of Trade chose four other gentlemen to represent various other interests, but who also happen to be public wharfingers, thus giving the Authority five members not only able to represent this great private interest in the Port, but also from personal experience, in a position to advise the Authority on many matters of practical management.

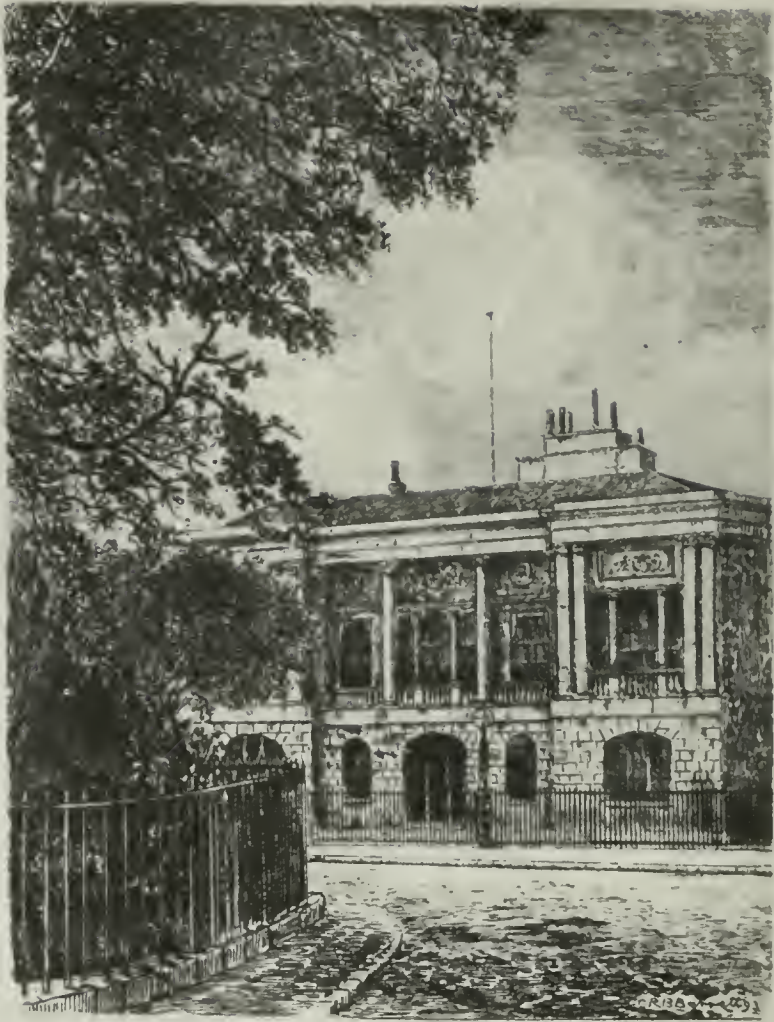
CHAPTER XXXIV

The Trinity House

THE Trinity House is the colloquial and convenient name given to the body responsible in the United Kingdom for the lighting and buoying of the coasts and estuaries, and also (in some of the ports) for the appointment of pilots and the regulation of pilotage.

The first charter which was granted by Henry VIII in 1514 was bestowed upon the mariners of England with the title of "The Master Wardens and Assistants of the Guild Fraternity or Brotherhood of the most glorious and Undivided Trinity and of St. Clement in the parish of Deptford Strond in the county of Kent." Of the earlier history of the body nothing certain is known. Mr. Henry Leach enunciates the theory that the institution was primarily a religious one, and identifies it with an order existing in King Alfred's reign. Mr. Cornwall Jones attributes the foundation to Stephen Langton, who, in the reign of King John organized in London a corporation of "godley disposed men who for the actual suppression of evil disposed persons bringing ships to destruction by the showing forth of false beacons do bind themselves together in the love of Lord Christ in the name of the Masters and Fellows of Trinity Guild, to succour from the dangers of the sea all who are beset upon the coasts of England to feed them when ahungred and athirst, to bind up their wounds and to build and light proper beacons for the guidance of mariners."

The navigation of the Thames estuary must have called for the assistance of skilled seamen from the earliest times. The channels in the estuary are narrow, tortuous, and there are many shoals. Unlighted and unbuoyed as they were then, they must have been dangerous in all weathers. The navigators had to rely upon landmarks (often these were trees) familiar to them, and these landmarks were sometimes removed between voyages without notice and occasionally with intent of enticing the mariner out of his course to the advantage of the wrecker. The natural



The Trinity House

residence of the men who followed the calling of pilots, responsible for navigating ships from the sea to the pool in London, would be at either end of their water journeys. Leigh and Deptford appear to have been chosen for this purpose. It is a reasonable inference that the pilots according to the example of all other trades in these early days, formed a guild for the protection of their interests. The guild had evidently gradually acquired property and the grant of Henry VIII confirmed their holding of it. At first sight, the introduction of St. Clement into the title of the guild appears puzzling as he had no special association with mariners. The explanation put forward for this is that as the order was a religious one, it took its name from the churches at the places where the pilot establishments were centred, viz., Deptford in the parish of Holy Trinity and Leigh, where the church was dedicated to St. Clement. This is supported by the fact that Masters and Brethren of the Trinity House are buried in Leigh churchyard.

The historian is at a great disadvantage in tracing the early history of the Trinity House, owing to the loss of documents in two disastrous fires which destroyed their archives, the first in the great fire of 1666, when the Trinity House in Water Lane was burnt to the ground, and again in 1714 when a similar fate overtook the new building erected on the site. According to a monument in the chancel of Stepney Church, the charter of 1514 was granted at the instance of Sir Thomas Spert, who was the first master of the Trinity House. Sir Thomas Spert was a man who had risen from the position of yeoman to that of Comptroller of the Navy. He had been master of the celebrated *Henry Grace à Dieu* under two captains and two petty captains before rising to his high office under the Crown. In 1517 he received the office of ballasting ships at some of the most lucrative stations on the river, paying £10 for the privilege. He was knighted in 1541. No documentary evidence exists as to the connexion of Spert with the inception of the charter and the sole authority is the inscription on the monument above referred to. This monument was not erected till 1622, eighty-one years after his death, and took the place of a decayed one. It seems hardly likely, however, that such a memorial could have gone unchallenged at the time had it not been correct in its statements.

We reach more solid ground with the charter itself. Under this document a licence was given to found a guild in honour of the Holy Trinity and St. Clement in the Church of Deptford Strond, for the reformation of the navy by the admission of young men and foreigners as pilots, and also for the larger purpose of making England a great naval power by the relief, increase and "augmentation of the shipping of this realm of England." The guild was constituted of Brothers and Sisters. It had power to arrest, punish, fine and chastise all offenders against any laws and ordinances made by them in pursuance of the objects of their charter. The establishment included a chaplain to celebrate divine service for the safe estate of the King and his "most dear consort" Katharine and for their souls when they were dead. The larger purpose of the guild was more clearly revealed in 1520 when the Admiralty and Navy Boards were established, and the building yard at Deptford was placed under the direct control of the Trinity Guild.

The dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 left the Guild untouched, perhaps because of its recent institution by the King himself, but doubtless the secular utility of the Guild for the advancement of the navy was a legitimate factor in securing immunity from the general confiscation of the property of the orders. The disappearance of the ecclesiastical elements of the institution was indicated by the simplification of the name to "The Corporation of the Trinity House of Deptford Strond," and by the withdrawal of Sisters from the Order except as pensioners. At Newcastle and Hull, the two most important ports on the east coast similar institutions were established by Henry VIII with the same object in view.

Shipping and all other institutions connected with it dwindled in importance during the rancorous religious struggles of the reign of Henry's son and elder daughter, but the Trinity House succeeded in preserving its position and property, and was evidently held in high esteem by the Ministers of Elizabeth, as we find in the eighth year of her reign an Act was passed describing the Corporation as "a company of the chiefest and most expert masters and governors of ships charged with the conduction of the Queen Majesty's navy royal" and conferring upon them

the further duty of erecting "such and so many beacons marks and signs for the sea in such place or places of the seashores and uplands near the sea coasts or forelands of the sea only for seamarks as to them shall seem most meet needful and requisite whereby the dangers may be avoided and escaped and ships the better come into their ports without peril." This, it will be observed, extended the jurisdiction of the Corporation as a lighthouse authority beyond the limits of the Port of London. The Act also enabled the Corporation to grant licences to row in the river to poor seamen who were not freemen of the City. It was two centuries, however, before the Corporation obtained full control of all English lighthouses, owing to the practice of the Crown of granting lighthouses to private individuals who collected tolls in consideration of paying rents and maintaining the lighthouses. It was an Act passed in 1836 that gave the Corporation power to expropriate all other interests in English coast lights and to take over their management and revenues.

Later in Elizabeth's reign an extended function was conferred upon the Corporation by the transference to them of the rights of ballastage in the Thames. Every vessel then coming to the Port required to be ballasted as she was discharged. This was done by the employment of vessels which dredged up the gravel and sand from the river bed and then transferred the dredged material either direct or by means of barges to the vessel requiring ballast. The profit on this service or from farming it out to private individuals had from time immemorial been allocated to the Lord High Admiral. These rights were formally bestowed upon the Trinity House Corporation in 1593. With the ballastage privileges were transferred the revenues from shipping for the services rendered for beaconage and buoyage. What these revenues were at this time does not appear, but in 1660 the dues payable to the Corporation for vessels entering the Thames were : through the North Channel 4s. per 100 tons, and through the South Channel 3s. per 100 tons. Colliers from the north paid $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per chaldron on the coal carried. Vessels from Norway, the Baltic and other northern ports paid 1s. 4d. per 100 tons.

A revised charter was granted in 1604, and we first read of the division of the Brethren into Elder and Younger.

At this period the personnel of the establishment was considerably enlarged. The Corporation were called upon to advise upon questions affecting seamen for the navy. By 1636 they were raising wrecks in the channels of the Thames. Their services were enlisted for the suppression of pirates on the English coast. They granted certificates to pilots. They recommended masters for the navy. Their endorsement was wanted for the appointment of English consuls at certain foreign ports. In disputes upon matters of seamanship they were constantly acting as arbitrators, and also on questions of sea limits.

At the advent to power of the puritans the Corporation was at its zenith. But the new régime had little confidence in them. The Brethren were divided in their religious attachments, and they were suspect alike from their close association with the Court and from a name which suggested objectionable Popish associations. In 1647 Roundheads were added to the Corporation, and this was followed by the revocation of the charter by Parliament. The event which probably decided this revocation was a petition in June, 1648, from the Younger Brethren together with Masters and Mariners on the Thames praying for a personal treaty with the King. No fresh charter was granted during the Commonwealth, and the Trinity House staff was run as a Government office closely watched by the Parliamentarians. In this position they were engaged in pressing crews for the navy and in the following January were inflicting penalties on defaulters.

The confiscation of the property by Parliament was cancelled by the Restoration but the Trinity Corporation never recovered their former position in naval affairs. In that respect they were gradually relegated to the position of advisers on some of the technical sides of the Admiralty operations. Till the middle of the nineteenth century they conducted the examination of masters for the navy.

At the call of patriotism the skill and experience of the Corporation was always at the service of the country. When the Dutch fleet arrogantly sailed up the Thames in 1667 and panic seized upon the metropolis it was to the Trinity Brethren that the King turned for advice as to the scheme for sinking ships in the Thames to obstruct the navigation of the Dutchmen up the river. When the

mutiny at the Nore took place in 1797 and it was feared that the mutineers would take their ships over to the enemy, it was the Elder Brethren who suggested that the vessels could be imprisoned in the river by the device of removing all buoys and beacons and seamarks in the river and to the carrying out of this suggestion may be attributed the early quelling of the mutiny. The threat of Buonaparte in 1803 to land an army in this country provided an occasion for the Corporation to perform a notable act of patriotism in equipping ten frigates for the protection of the Thames. These ships were manned by 1,200 volunteers raised by the Corporation and for the two years while there was danger of invasion the vessels were moored in the Lower Hope ready to resist the invader. The volunteers were embodied under the name of the "Royal Trinity House Volunteer Artillery," and included the Elder and Younger Brethren of the Trinity House, commanders and officers of Indiamen, masters and mates of merchantmen, and other seafaring people. William Pitt, who was then Master of the Trinity House, was the colonel of the corps.

Returning now to the Restoration period let us note that Charles II did not grant a new charter in place of that revoked by Cromwell. Pepys, whose influence on administrative details was great, seems first to have favoured the functions of the Corporation being carried out as a Government Department. Whether he was eventually propitiated by being made an Elder Brother and Master does not appear, but he was responsible for the new charter granted by James II based upon the revoked charter, the chief alteration being that the governing body was increased from thirteen to thirty-one by the addition of eighteen Elder Brethren to the then body of Master, four Wardens and eight Assistants, and the Crown reserved its right to remove the Elder Brethren and clerks at pleasure. The charter endorsed the exemption of members of the Corporation from land service, even making them immune from service on juries and inquests, except Admiralty sessions where their skill and experience are still utilized in the position of nautical assessors.

Since the charter of James II, the constitution of the Corporation has remained unchanged except that in 1871 the number of the Corporation was reduced to the original

number of thirteen acting members. The number of honorary members was fixed at eleven, and vacancies on that section of the Corporation are filled by the process of *congé d'élire*.

The original guild character of the Corporation is indicated by the fact that it has administered charities, chiefly almshouses and pensions for old and wounded seamen and their widows, the funds being derived from special benefactions or accumulated from surplus income in prosperous years. The only public challenge of the excellence of their administration has been on the subject of these charities. There were investigations in 1732, 1845, 1861 and 1895, but the Corporation's administration was reported to be satisfactory in each case. The only almshouses left are those in the Mile End Road, built in 1695.

Two other inquiries may be recorded, the one of 1834 which resulted in the legislation of 1836 enabling the Trinity House to buy up all private lights; and the other of 1853 which led to the control of funds collected from dues and tolls being transferred to the Board of Trade, causing a large reduction in the annual income available for charity.

The value attached to the advice and counsel of the Corporation is attested by numerous instances in the history of the Port. In particular, the House of Commons Committee which sat on the Port of London question in 1796 were much influenced by the advice of the Trinity House in coming to their decisions on the practical questions involved in schemes of docks and river quays. Their position in this respect may be gathered from the fact that in the many plans, whether suggested or consummated, proposed during the late nineteenth century for the reconstitution of the Port, the authors have always provided for the presence of the Trinity House on the controlling body.

One recent change in duties of the Trinity House touching the Port of London was the surrender of the rights of ballastage to the Thames Conservancy in 1894. Those rights were always conservancy rights. Owing to the supersession of sailing ships by steamers and the use of water ballast by steamers, the raising of gravel from the bed of the river had ceased to be profitable, and the passing of the privilege to the Thames Conservancy was viewed



BALLAST DREDGER OFF THE TOWER
From a drawing by CLARKSON STANFIELD. 1827

merely as an arrangement for the general convenience in that it brought under the same public authority the control of the deepening of the river and the disposal of the materials raised. It may be added here that the demand for Thames ballast for building purposes has grown of late years and has made the granting of licences for dredging ballast a source of considerable income to the Port of London Authority as the successors of the Thames Conservancy.

The present constitution of the Trinity House Corporation is as follows :—

There are two classes of Brethren, Elder and Younger. The Elder Brethren are divided into active and honorary. The active Elder Brethren are the managers of the Corporation. They consist of a Master and Deputy Master, four Wardens and eight Assistants. The Master is an eminent man, sometimes a royal personage, and his position is usually an honorary one. The Deputy Master is the head of the executive. The Elder Brethren are principally men distinguished by capacity in matters connected with the mercantile marine, including the commanders of large steamers and retired officers of the Royal Navy. Vacancies are filled by the Elder Brethren promoting Younger Brethren, and the latter are appointed by the Elder Brethren from outside. The number of the Younger Brethren is not fixed. The only privilege assigned to the Younger Brethren is the power of voting at the election of the Master and Wardens.

The honorary Brethren are princes, distinguished statesmen and naval officers of high standing.

The Trinity House is the general lighthouse authority for England and Wales, the Channel Islands, and Gibraltar. While it is not the universal authority in the Kingdom for pilotage or the buoying of channels it still performs these functions in the Port of London, and in this respect continues to execute its ancient duties in spite of the recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1900 that these duties should be transferred to the Port of London Authority. In the Port of London they control the lighthouses, one light-vessel, six gas buoys and ten other buoys, and they continue also to carry out the duty imposed upon them by the early dock acts of examining persons

who are aspiring to be dockmasters in order to certify that they are competent to handle ships.

The considerations involved in the maintenance of the Trinity House as the pilotage authority in the Port of London are discussed in the chapter dealing with the Report of the Royal Commission of 1900.

CHAPTER XXXV

Dock and Wharf Labour

IN recent years the question of dock labour on the Thames has come into prominence in connexion with all discussions relating to the conditions of employment of labour. In these discussions dock labour has often been taken as the typical example of the most undesirable form of labour. It has long been alleged (and little trouble has been taken on the employer's side to confute the allegation) that it is the most underpaid, the most irregular and the least skilled type of labour and only resorted to either by the lowest classes of the community or by men who are unemployable in any other sphere of industry. The general character of labour at the docks is not of high rank, but it is absolutely foreign to the truth to charge this class of labour with possessing the aggregate of forbidding qualities attributed to it. The docker has long been better paid than the carman for the hours he works. The majority of dockers get as much regular work as they want, and the most casual candidate has more days work in the year open to him than the hop picker, the herring curer or the numbers of the numerous seasonal trades centred in London. To wheel a truck along a smooth quay is the simplest form of work till it is tried, then the experimenter will learn that even this elementary operation is not as mechanical a one as are multitudes of operations in factories. The attack on the character of the men employed is altogether beside the mark in these days. Their work is often rough and dirty but on the whole the men are a steady and honest class of worker, especially having regard to their opportunities for pilfering both food and drink. Their patriotism is beyond question, for though as a class they were immune from recruiting in the Great War, on account of the national importance of transport facilities being maintained at the highest standard of efficiency, a very large percentage of the men insisted upon joining the colours.

The truth is that a legend has grown around the occupation of the docker founded possibly upon the House of

Commons Committee's report of 1796 which contained severe charges against ship labourers of that day on the subject of the theft of goods in the Port. Later, picturesque writers on London found good material for contrasts in the setting of the docker in his humble rough attire against the valuable silks, ivory and other luxurious merchandise he had to handle. The author Timbs, writing in 1855, relates that dock labour included bankrupt master-butchers, publicans, old soldiers and sailors, Polish refugees, broken down gentlemen, lawyers, clerks, suspended government clerks, discharged domestic servants and thieves. In 1872 there was an alleged discarded heir to a baronetcy regularly engaged in weighing hogsheads of sugar on the West India Dock quays, and with scions of the aristocracy come down in the world through drink, earning a guinea a week (hence termed guinea pigs) was pointed out to all fresh arrivals on the staff. Journalists drew sketches of ragged out-of-works in a frenzied crowd answering the call of the foreman at the dock gates. The sketches were taken as facts. No one ever went to the docks to check the statements. It was too far away for any one to go down to Poplar at taking-on time at 7.45 in the morning and so the public, rather liking to have its sympathies aroused by a horrid tale of white slavery in their midst, accepted the idea that a man who worked at the docks was little better than an outcast. No one can pretend that even now the conditions of employment of dock labour are ideal. What follows will, it is hoped, convince the reader that whatever faults there may have been on the part of the employers in the past, there has in the last generation been a genuine desire to ameliorate the effects of the difficult conditions of work in the Port arising from its peculiar character and contingencies.

The annals of the early days of the Port leave us destitute of any certain information regarding the terms of employment of the labourers in it. The chief employers were probably the owners of the vessel who engaged their crews to discharge and load cargoes. Such a practice is not infrequent in Bristol and foreign ports to-day. Even in London to-day a foreign shipowner occasionally avails himself of the permission accorded by the Port of London Authority at all its docks to discharge the cargo by the crew of the vessel. In earlier times the operations of receiving and shipping

off goods at the quay edge of the wharf may have been carried out by men sent there by the merchant, and such goods would be conveyed to and from the merchant's depot by the carmen. Where the goods were discharged or loaded in the stream, the conveyance to and from the quay was effected by the lightermen.

That the work in the Port was not of bad reputation amongst workmen in the fourteenth century is indicated by Langland in "Piers the Plowman," for he says of labourers in London that "some chose merchandize, they throve the best."

At what period the men employed on the quays came under any central control cannot be ascertained. The City Corporation claimed immemorially the right of making by-laws for the regulation and government of all persons concerned in the unloading and delivering of merchandise imported into the Port, and they exercised that right until the West India Dock Act of 1799 practically put an end to their monopoly of control in this respect. In 1607 we find a petition of the Tacklehouse porters objecting to a proposal to establish a new office for lading and unlading of all merchants' goods of the twelve leading City Companies. The Corporation had always appointed poor decayed citizens to this office, and it was held that the proposed arrangements would throw out many deserving men and give great dissatisfaction to merchants. Apparently the contemplated changes were not carried out, for, fourteen years later an attack was made on the City privileges of managing the labour of the Port on the ground that trade was being interfered with by reason of the difficulty in controlling labour, and the Lord Mayor defended the City's position by holding that they had time out of mind and still possessed the portage "of all things measurable" brought into the Port of London, and that the Company of Porters had also been time out of mind a fraternity called the Billingsgate Porters, freemen of the City and bound on all occasions to attend to that service and to carry corn to His Majesty's granaries at rates settled by the Common Council. The privilege being so ancient and one upon which so many freemen (300 to 400) and their families depended, the Mayor prayed that it might not be interrupted because of the turbulence of a few men. Again, the defence appears to have been successful.

Early in the eighteenth century we find the porters organized into close associations. They were not then an incorporated company like the watermen, but were formed into four brotherhoods under the control of the common council. The first brotherhood consisted of the Ticket Porters. These were all freemen of the City. They landed and shipped off goods imported from or exported to all parts of America. They also housed goods at merchants' warehouses. The Fellowship Porters were the second brotherhood. They landed or shipped off such goods as were measurable by dry measure such as corn, salt, coals, etc., and also had the right of housing these goods in merchants' warehouses. Both the ticket porters and fellowship porters were credited with being well governed under an organization which required admission fees and fined offenders for misconduct. They were the precursors of the Dockers' Union of to-day. The ticket porters had to give "good security" for fidelity. They wore metal tickets on their girdles. One curious custom that marked them was that on the Sunday following the 29th June they attended at St. Mary at Hill to listen to a sermon for their special edification. The night before the sermon was delivered, they waited on the merchants living near Billingsgate and furnished them with nosegays for the service. The ticket porters themselves at the service went nosegay in hand to the communion table and offered gifts in relief of the poor. The merchants with their wives, children and servants attended and bestowed their offerings also. The third brotherhood, the Tackle Porters, were ticket porters who were furnished with weights and scales and they weighed goods. The fourth brotherhood is described as the Companies' Porters who rendered services for goods landed from or loaded into vessels from the Baltic, Holland, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Turkey and towards or beyond the Cape of Good Hope.

The charges then made by the different classes of porters are stated to have been as follows :—

| | <i>Shipping off.</i> | | <i>Landing.</i> | | <i>Housing.</i> | | <i>Weighing.</i> |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|------------------|
| Sugar (hogshead) | 3d. | .. | 3d. | .. | 3d. | .. | 4d. |
| Tobacco (hogshead) | 2d. | .. | 2d. | .. | 2d. | .. | 2d. |
| Logwood (ton) | .. | 1s. | .. | 1s. | .. | 1s. | .. |

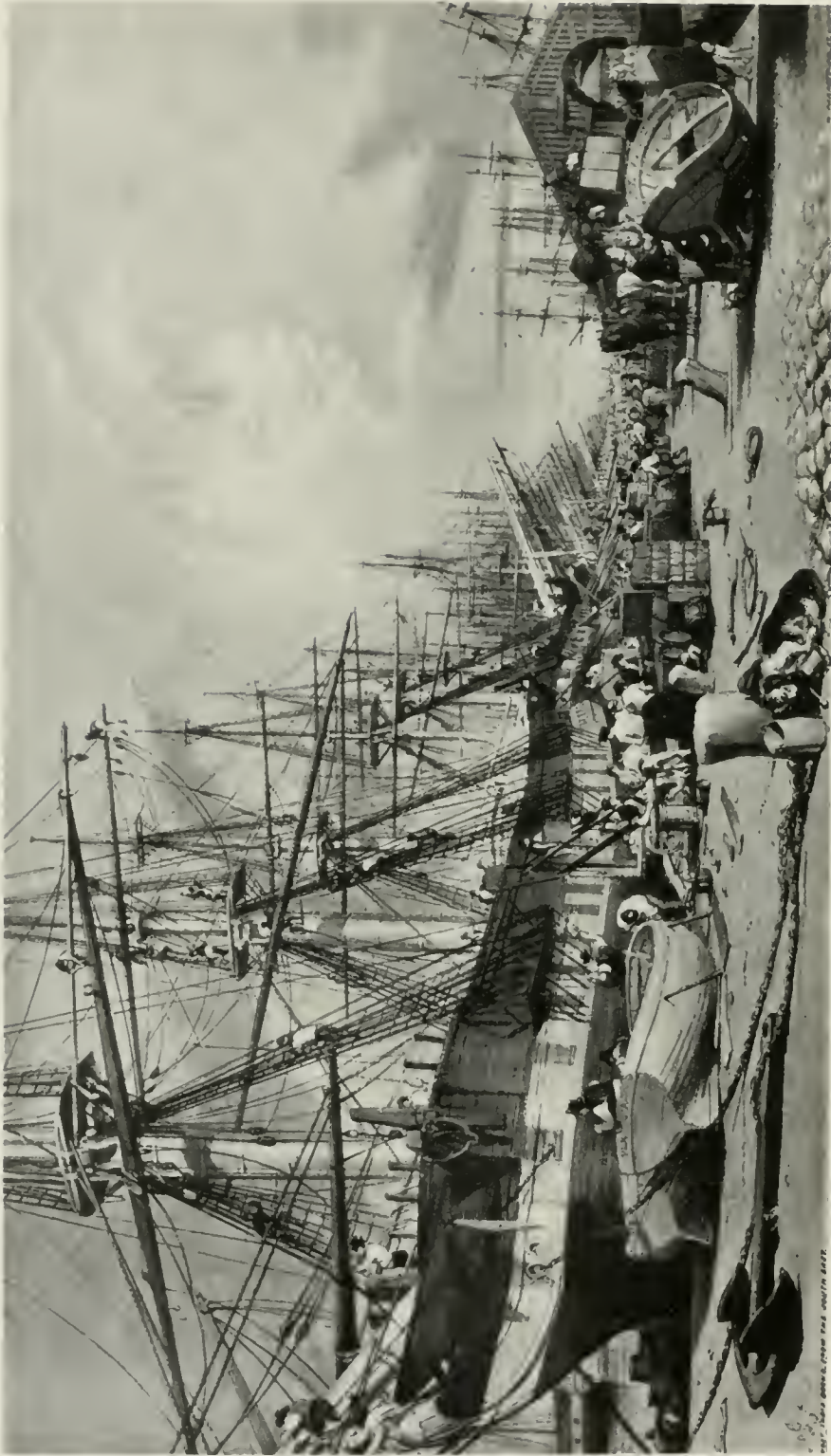
By the end of the eighteenth century the organizations

of the porters had developed and consolidated. Evidence was given at the 1796 inquiry as to their constitution by Mr. Samuel March, clerk to the tacklehouse and ticket porters. From this evidence it appears that the tacklehouse porters were then appointed by the twelve principal livery companies of the City of London, and were entitled to the work or labour of unshipping, landing, carrying and housing all goods imported by and belonging to the South Sea Company, or the East India Company, and of all other goods and merchandises coming from any other ports except from the East Country (Baltic coasts), Ireland, coastwise, and the British Plantations. No person was admitted in any tacklehouse as a master or as a fellow porter unless he was a freeman of the City. Tacklehouse porters were required to enter into bonds of £500 with four sufficient householders as sureties as security for making good losses sustained in the handling of goods. Any unqualified person attempting to perform the work of a tacklehouse porter was liable to a penalty of £5. No tacklehouse porter was allowed to charge for his services higher rates than those authorized by the Corporation.

The ticket porters were appointed by the City itself and were entitled to the monopoly of work connected with pitch, tar, deals, flax, hemp, and other goods imported from Danzig and other East Country ports, as also all iron, ropes, green wood, all Irish goods, coastwise goods except lead, and goods from the foreign plantations. They were required generally to work under the tacklehouse porters. They also had to be freemen. Before admission to their society each candidate was required to produce to the governor (who was always to be an alderman) a certificate from the minister and churchwardens of his parish testifying to his being an industrious man and willing by his labour to support himself and his family. He had to enter into a bond with two sureties in the penalty of £100 that he would "behave and demean himself in the vocation and business of a porter" and to make other numerous and exacting promises as to the faithful performance of his duties. If he refused to work when applied to by the tacklehouse porters or left work before it was finished he was fined 5s. and in default of payment his ticket was taken from him and he stood suspended during the pleasure of

the governor. The rates of remuneration of the ticket porters were laid down in a tariff fixed by the Corporation. The Corporation appointed the alderman who was to act as governor, and he had full power to determine all differences between members touching their labour and work or questions affecting discipline. Members not conforming to his decisions were subject to a fine of 13s. 4d. At this period the number of ticket porters sanctioned was 1,500 and upwards, and no labour in the Port could be performed by any other person whilst there was a sufficient number of these men offering themselves. It is noteworthy that in the grievous complaints made at the 1796 inquiry as to the pilferage of goods no serious charge was made against that section of labour which carried out the operations on the quays or in the warehouses. All the witnesses attributed their losses to the plundering which took place on board ships and from barges, the crews of the ships and lightermen with the connivance of the lower ranks of customs' officers being the persons involved. It will not be overlooked that in the river the opportunities of robbery were greater than on the quays, but the comparative immunity from robbery when once goods were ashore cannot altogether be dissociated from the fact that some care was exercised in the selection of the porters, and that they were more strictly governed and disciplined.

The tacklehouse and ticket porters were amongst the most strenuous opponents to the project for the construction of the docks, claiming that their craft would suffer great injury from the diversion of labour to the docks and the cessation of the City privileges in respect of the labour carried on there, and they were amongst the interests compensated for loss of privileges. On the occasion of the scheme of the St. Katharine Dock being brought before Parliament in 1825 the porters again presented themselves as an aggrieved body by reason of the proposal which involved further curtailment of their powers. It was then declared that there were 3,000 of these porters licensed by the Corporation. It was stated on their behalf that under the rules of the Fellowship they were obliged to attend as ordered at all times, and at all places without any choice on their part on the chance of getting work, at 4 a.m. till 8 p.m. in the summer and from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the



WEST INDIA DOCK FROM THE SOUTH EAST
From an engraving by W. Parrott

winter at the various offices where they were taken on, and that a ruler of the Fellowship was always in attendance to compel the men to carry out jobs in cases where the men might think the work was likely to be unprofitable. When accused of charging excessive rates such as £1 os. 10d. for discharging 100 quarters of malt against 8s. 4d. charged by other porters, the reply was that they must be judged by the average gain from their labour which they averred was only 3s. a day taking the year through. By the time the St. Katharine Dock Act was passed, the public disposition to recognize claims of privileged institutions had passed away, and like the older dock companies the porters failed in enlisting the sympathies of the Houses of Parliament. Gradually the privileges of the porters so far as they had remained in the riverside wharves disappeared, leaving no privileged class of labour in the Port save the watermen and lightermen. With the privileges, disappeared the machinery of organization.

The West India Dock Company, in opening their new dock in 1802, were faced with the question of finding labour for the very important section of trade which was forced into their system. Poplar was then a sparsely inhabited suburb, but there is nothing to show that there was any serious trouble in procuring the labour that was wanted. Doubtless many of the tacklehouse and ticket porters who had been engaged at the wharves handling West India produce followed the work when it left the wharves for the docks. The wages were fixed at 5½d. per hour, or 3s. 6d. a day. The question of guarding the docks was one that exercised the minds of the directors long before they were ready for business. The Government for a time supplied a guard, but eighteen months after the docks were opened the directors required every labourer and cooper in their service to join a regiment formed by them for the protection of the property.

The casual nature of the dock work was early the subject of consideration. Two hundred permanent labourers were appointed, but these were too many for constant employment. The West India Dock trade was the most seasonal of all the trades of the Port and there was no other trade in this system of docks to compensate for the slack seasons. Attempts were made to keep employment regular by

utilizing the spare time of men on levelling and mending roads. A remedy for the worst of all the evils of casual labour, viz., that of expecting men to turn up to the morning call and then disappointing them, was tried in 1804, resembling the existing regulation with the same object, which has been in operation at the London and India dock system for the last twenty years. A book was kept at the principal storekeeper's office in which was inserted the orders for the delivery of goods expected to be executed on the following day and this enabled the officers to know approximately the evening beforehand how many men would be required and to inform the men who were likely to be taken on.

The idea of converting their officers and servants into a military corps was not imitated by the London Dock directors, but as their property was within half a mile of the City boundary the case for special protection was not urgent. A staff of permanent and preference labourers was appointed to the London Dock in 1805, several months before the dock was opened. Wages had risen since the West India Dock was opened in 1802, and the London Dock directors found it necessary to give their permanent men 24s. a week. The rest had 3s. 6d. a day. Foremen coopers received £100 a year, and had to give security in the sum of £300. Labouring coopers only earned 18s. a week. A foreman of labourers was paid £80 a year, and gave security for £100. Shortly after the London Dock was opened, the permanent and preferable staff of labourers was fixed at 100, any balance being taken on as required daily. A minute of the board passed in 1809 laid down the vicious rule that in future the vacancies for preferable labourers (who were promoted in turn to the permanent ranks) should be filled up by the directors in rotation beginning with the chairman, deputy chairman and treasurer and afterwards in alphabetical order. At the same time the labour arrangements were reconsidered in view of altered conditions of work then pending. When the dock was first opened the hours for labour were in summer from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. and in the winter from 7 a.m. till 5 p.m., those being the hours of attendance of customs, officers, an hour and a half being allowed for dinner. But under a recent statute, business was so regulated that the work could

be continued without interruption from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the summer and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in winter, and with this reduced number of hours of attendance, the board conceived it possible to reduce the wages to ordinary labourers down to 3s. a day. The meal interval was reduced from an hour and a half to a quarter of an hour only. A permanent staff of 300, which was equal to the minimum number employed at slack times was appointed on these terms. Two years afterwards there was a strike of these men but it does not appear to have been a serious one. The most unsatisfactory feature of this revision of the arrangement from the men's point of view was not the reduced hours, but the limitation of the time of rest and refreshment, and though the company anticipated a saving of £2,400 a year, it is doubtful whether it remained more than a paper saving. This restriction of meal times lasted for many years at the docks generally. Up to 1889 the meal time was not more than twenty minutes. In that year it became half an hour. It was afterwards raised to threequarters of an hour, and in 1911 to an hour, where it now stands.

The East India Dock Company began its career as an employer by the enunciation of the praiseworthy principle that the first consideration was that the company should have efficient and reputable characters in their employ, and that it would be a mistaken economy "to adopt the line of frugality too close" in relation to its staff, especially at the outset when the utmost vigilance and circumspection would be needful. The chairman of the company, Mr. Joseph Cotton, was a director of the East India Company and this admirable doctrine which he propounded and his board approved was doubtless a reflection of the policy which had guided that company in its administration of its Indian possessions. How the doctrine worked out in practice may be gathered from the organization of the staff which was approved. The establishment of the East India Dock on the opening of the dock was as follows :—

| | <i>Per annum.</i> | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|----|----|----|----|------|
| Dockmaster | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | £400 |
| His deputy.. .. . | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 300 |
| Assistant | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 200 |
| Gate opener | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 70 |
| Six officers for 180 days, at 6s. a day each | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 312 |
| Six subordinate working men | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 216 |

| | |
|--|--------|
| 24 constant men at 3s. a day | £1,127 |
| 100 men as lumpers to load and unload for 240 days.. | 3,600 |
| 6 watchmen at 3s. 6d. a day | 383 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £6,608 |

As the East India Dock was the latest of the three systems of docks opened at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it may be assumed that this organization was the best that the experience of dock management could conceive up to that time. The salaries and wages of the labourers and subordinate officers do not suggest that the "line of frugality" had been advanced far towards the line of extravagance. The dockmaster acted as superintendent as well as actually supervising the docking and undocking of shipping at the entrance. In the earlier years of the dock undertakings this officer was sometimes called the captain of the dock. The six officers who acted as supervisors of the discharge and loading of ships were pensioned chief officers of East India ships. They were guaranteed 6s. a day for a six months' season. The six subordinate working men acted as foremen of the gangs in the holds of the ships. These were able-bodied men conversant with an India ship's stowage and preference was given to gunners. The gate opener was primarily to check persons and goods entering or leaving the dock. The twenty-four "constant" men were men who were dispersed amongst the lumpers when working in the hold to "prevent idleness or speculation." Presumably the results were to be secured by the example as well as precept of the constant men, but 3s. a day pay in times when wheat reached 126s. a quarter hardly provided the guarantee. The 100 who were to be employed as work needed them were required to be persons of some character and respectability, and their adhesion to the terms of employment was secured by the issue of tickets which protected them from the press gang. It was remarked "that however inferior their station, by a selection and regulation to this effect they will become and feel respectable in themselves."

The pressure of economic conditions caused by the European wars led to labour everywhere temporarily receiving higher remuneration. After Waterloo, the reaction set in and wages came down to the old level. Thus we

find that in February, 1816, the payments by the East India Dock Company, who contracted for the lumpers' work in loading vessels were reduced by about 20 per cent. And in the following month the board of that company passed the following resolution which gives as good an estimate as is available of the value at which port labour was appraised in 1816, viz. :—

The Court taking into consideration at the commencement of the season 1816 for delivery of the ships the relative proportions between the wages arranged in a time of war and the great advance on bread and other necessities of life during that period, and the present period of peace, as well as the reduction in the price of bread and other articles, and likewise the reduced scale of wages throughout all establishments and circumstances connected with the labour, the time upon duty and other particulars, have Resolved that upon and after the 25th of March the wages of the under-mentioned persons employed at the docks be upon the following scale :—

| | | |
|--|----|---------------|
| Labourers and working gangs | .. | 3/- per day |
| Foremen of labourers and working gangs .. | .. | 3/6 " |
| Transport gang above 4 years' service .. | .. | 3/8 " |
| Transport gang under 4 years' service .. | .. | 3/2 " |
| Lock gatemen | .. | 4/2 " |
| Export dock gatekeeper and collector of tolls .. | .. | 25/- per week |
| Other gatekeepers with houses | .. | 22/- " |
| Gatekeepers without houses | .. | 24/- " |
| Principal gatekeepers having no house .. | .. | 31/- " |
| Foreman carpenter | .. | 5/- per day |
| Working carpenter | .. | 4/6 " |
| Carman having a house and Sunday work .. | .. | 24/- per week |

The St. Katharine Dock was opened in October, 1828. Their organization provided for an elaborate set of rules for the governance of labourers. There were two classes, preferable and extra. The former had a permanent status, the most active, willing and intelligent of them having the opportunity of becoming foremen. All preferable labourers were required to attend daily a quarter of an hour before work commenced when the roll was called, and if not punctual, only received half a day's pay. Extra labourers were engaged outside the dock gates and were required to have a reference as to character. Vacancies in the preferable staff were filled by the best of the extra men. A high standard was set in the regulations by the statement that "honesty and sobriety were indispensable qualifications,

the slightest deviation from them will be attended with immediate and irrevocable dismissal." No cans, bottles or other vessels capable of containing liquids were allowed to be brought into the docks by the labourers. Beer was supplied inside the docks when required with a limit of one pint per man daily. Labourers were subject to be searched upon being dismissed for the day, first by the foreman in the presence of heads of departments, and subsequently at the dock gates. It had been proposed that the wages of the labourers should be 18s. per week, but this was reduced to 16s. a week for permanent labourers. Extra labourers were paid at the rate of 4d. per hour. The regulations showed some humane sentiment on the part of the directors in one to the effect that should any man of good character and known industrious habits find the description of work to which he was appointed, beyond his physical powers he would be relieved if possible on application to his principal without in any way prejudicing his position, and that when in course of time from infirmity he became incapable of more laborious duties he would be employed in departments to which his declining powers were best adapted. No provision was made, however, for any allowance to men when they were past work. The St. Katharine labour establishment consisted of 225 permanent men and 200 preferable men, the classes of men having been renamed to fit the actual conditions of employment. The maximum number employed at the dock at this time would be about 1,000.

From this time forward for the next half century there are few outstanding happenings in the employment of port labour. The conditions varied only slightly at the docks of the different companies and at the riverside wharves. The supply of efficient labour was generally equal to the demand whilst there was always available enough labour of a sort to deal with emergency demands. Though it was not highly paid, the hours were not long, and as machinery came to be introduced the work was not so arduous or dangerous. The out of work and the out of character of the great city found their way to the dock gates in the morning on the chance of being wanted, knowing that if the demands of trade were urgent no questions would be asked. The opportunities for the petty

pilfering of food in the docks were not infrequently found to be an attraction. We have in 1839 the superintendent of the London Dock reporting that the appointment of labourers to permanent positions frequently lessened the value of their services by producing decreased exertions, and in order to get better results from his department he recommended that a special allowance of 1s. 6d. a week should be given to the more efficient of the extra men employed. This had the effect of making the position of extra men more attractive than that of permanent positions. No organizations for the dock labourer were in existence. The Stevedores' Union for the men engaged in loading ships was the first of these organizations. The men in this occupation are a more skilled class of labour than the ordinary dock labourer and have always enjoyed a higher wage—sometimes double—than that of a dock labourer. The competition amongst the dock companies for the business of the Port had its effect in the character of the labour employed. Cheapness was the chief consideration, and the casual labourer was very cheap apparently. There was no Employers' Liability Act or Workmen's Compensation Act to invoke if he met with accident, and the best of the directors thought all claims were met when they had paid a few shillings a week for a few weeks as compassionate allowance and subscribed 50 or 100 guineas to the local hospital. Men could be had by the day or half-day, or even for a couple of hours, so that no waste of time waiting for the job was entailed to the company. It was the men that paid for the waiting time by waiting. By 1872 day wages were at the rate of 4d. an hour to ordinary dock labourers. The employers' point of view must not, however, be lost sight of. Their difficulty arose from the seasonal nature of the trades they dealt with. The West India arrivals of vessels were limited to the spring and summer, and at the West India Dock, therefore, the autumn and winter only provided work for men engaged on deliveries of sugar and rum. Even in the season itself, trade was irregular. An east wind in the spring would keep back the West India fleet for several weeks, with the result that a great rush of work came into the docks when west winds blew again. Had however there been a single control of the docks, or a friendly

agreement made for the exchange of labour by the companies, much of the evil of casual labour might even then have been mitigated.

A vivid picture of the condition of port labour in the middle of the nineteenth century is given by Henry Mayhew in his London "Labour and the Labour Poor." His account is, no doubt, prejudiced by the attempt of his book to establish the connexion between casual labour and the evils of drunkenness, but allowing for this prejudice, the account is entitled to be recorded in this connection. Mayhew visited every dock and some of the wharves, and interviewed both employer and employed. The former did not receive him effusively; the employees were more confiding. One thing may be gathered from Mayhew's inquiry, and that is that the character of labour had deteriorated during the half century that the docks had been opened, and that the companies almost entirely relied upon casual labour. The usual defence of intermittent character of the work was given. It was shown, for instance, that at the West India Dock, in one week in 1861, there were 42 ships entering, in the next week, 131; in the following week, 209; and in the fourth week, only 85. Again, at the London Dock, in 1860, whilst the lowest number of ships entering the dock in any one week in the previous year was 29, the highest number was 141. But this variation in arrivals was no new thing; it had prevailed since the opening of the docks and long before that, and was bound to be a condition of working while the arrivals of vessels was regulated by seasonal sailings and the direction of the wind. The explanation is rather to be found in the struggle for existence between the companies, caused by the senseless competition that supervened upon the expiry of the dock privileges. To maintain the dividends at as high a level as possible, economies were resorted to, and the easiest economy was to take advantage of a falling labour market. It should not, therefore, be without significance in relation to the public pressure for cheap services that it is not necessarily the competing capitalists who suffer from the first squeeze of the vice. The East India Dock had been amalgamated with the West India Dock Company in 1838—who were not moved by the noble sentiment of the junior partner, expounded in 1806, of only having "efficient and reputable characters,"

and of renouncing the line of "too close frugality" in relation to its staff. Mayhew found that for ordinary dock labour the wages averaged 2s. 4d. a day in winter and 2s. 6d. in summer, or at the rate of 4d. an hour, and this was the prevailing rate in the Port. Timber workers at the West India Docks and Surrey Docks then, as now, a purely seasonal occupation, might earn from 15s. to 30s. a week with overtime, but the season was only a six-months one. At the London Dock a small number of permanent men at 16s. 6d. a week was maintained, the rest were casual. Mayhew cites this dock as the worst example of the system and it is also to be remembered in this connexion that the London Dock was at this time the most impecunious. The "taking on" arrangements are described in detail. Masses of men, of all grades, were congregated within the principal road entrance of the dock at 7.30 in the morning, "some in half-fashioned surtouts burst at the elbow, with the dirty shirts showing through; others in greasy sporting jackets, with red pimpled faces; others in rags of gentility; some in rusty black; others with the knowing thieves' curl on each side of the jaunty cap; whilst here and there was a big, whiskered Pole. As the foremen made their appearance, began the scuffling and scrambling forth of countless hands high in the air. All were shouting, appealing, or coaxing," and the scene is described as one to sadden the most callous, with thousands of men struggling for one day's hire—the struggle being the fiercer from the knowledge that hundreds must be left to idle the day out in want. Those who were lucky enough to be chosen, were engaged on the hardest of hard work, for everything was then done by hand. Cranes were used, but steam power was not applied, because of the danger from fire, and hydraulic power was only in its infancy. The cranes for discharging vessels were worked by the system of the treadmill, with the difference that the force was applied inside instead of outside the wheel. From six to eight men entered a wooden cylinder or drum, upon which battens were nailed, and the men, laying hold of ropes, trod the wheel round, singing the while. The wheel was about 16 feet in diameter and 8 to 9 feet broad, and it was estimated that they would lift 18 to 20 cwt. forty times in an hour, an average height of 27 feet. The larger number

of the men were, however, engaged in cramped positions drawing cargo from its stowage on ships, or in trucking and piling weighty, dirty, rough packages on the quays and in the warehouses or vaults. Only at the St. Katharine Dock was there any method of selecting candidates for work. No labourer was employed there without a previous recommendation, and the system of gradual promotion to the permanent staff already alluded to was still in existence. The men at this dock were of a more decent class, notwithstanding that the wages were on the same low scale as at the other docks.

With the union of the London and St. Katharine Docks in 1864, the policy adopted by the amalgamated board tended to be that of the London company, and no improvement in labour conditions resulted. In the eighth decade of the century the position of things had improved by the introduction of machinery, but the large employers in the Port carried on their operations mainly by casual labour.

The years 1871 and 1872 marked an important era in the Port, in that dock labour as a class re-awoke and fought for higher status and remuneration. In those years British trade was exceedingly prosperous and the general demand for labour very great. Wages, especially in the skilled trades, were advanced and the agitation for better wages was extended to the agricultural labourers and to other classes where combinations of workmen had hitherto not been organized. In November, 1871, a small strike broke out amongst the tea-blenders at the West India Dock, and was immediately stopped by firm action. Without any organization in evidence, some of the men employed in certain of the docks and wharves in the Port demanded increased wages in June, 1872, and left work before an answer could be given. The centre of the movement was at the West India Dock, where the men went out on the 25th June, 1872. After making an effort to obtain other labour, negotiations were opened by the Company with the leaders of the strike, and with a promise to consider any just grievances the men were induced to resume work on the 3rd July, receiving immediately afterwards an undertaking that the minimum rate of wages should be increased from 4d. to 5d. per hour. This proved satisfactory to the men, and this rate was adopted throughout the Port, the docks



THE CHAPEL FOR SEAMEN, 1818

and wharf owners compensating themselves by increasing the charges to merchants and shipowners by 25 per cent.

There were local dock labour disturbances in the spring of 1880, arising from irregular practices in cases where the work was let out to contractors. The men had cause for complaint and resumed work immediately they had the promise of redress.

Some of the employers endeavoured to safeguard themselves against future strikes by again reverting to the plan of having a substantial nucleus of permanent men, but under the stress of later competition the East and West India Dock Company, who were the chief exponents of this policy, deemed it expedient to disperse their permanent staff, and by the end of the year 1886 the conditions of employment were much what they had been for half a century, save that the day wages were higher, that a piece-work system was in force in many docks and wharves, and that a qualified protection against the results of accident had been given to labour by the Employers' Liability Act.

At the end of 1886 a strike broke out at Tilbury Dock. It lasted a short time only and did not succeed. It is noteworthy now as marking the first appearance of Mr. Ben Tillett as a Labour leader in the Port of London. Though he failed then, the experience he gained could not have been without results in equipping him to take a prominent share in the great strike of 1889. There might have been more success in this local strike if it had not taken place in winter, or if there had been organization, or if the public could have been interested in the cause.

Three years later the circumstances were more favourable for action. Unemployment had largely disappeared from the East End of London, and there had developed a public conscience on the subject of the conditions of life of the East End working classes, represented in its practical form by the settlements at Toynbee Hall, Bethnal Green, and Canning Town. The life of the casual docker was accepted as the specially typical case of the sordid, dull, and precarious existence in the East End, which called to society for drastic and immediate remedy. The dockers needed remedy, but it was never so radically bad as society was taught to believe by such articles as Mr. G. R. Sims wrote for the *Daily News* under the heading of "How the

Poor Live" and "Horrible London." A small union had been founded called the 'Tea Operatives' and General Labourers' Association, with Mr. Ben Tillett as secretary. The first step taken in the strike of 1889 was a letter written by Mr. Ben Tillett on the 7th August, addressed to Mr. H. Norris, the head of the South West India Dock Department, asking that the pay of dock labourers should be increased from 5d. to 6d. per hour between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. and to 8d. per hour after 6 p.m. This was followed by a further letter on the 13th demanding a reply. This reply not being forthcoming, a number of labourers, estimated at 2,500, suddenly declined to go to work at the East India Dock and West India Dock systems, which had been the scene of Mr. Tillett's activities since the abortive strike in 1886. The men formed themselves into a procession and visited the Victoria Docks, and subsequently the London Dock, with the object of drawing out the men working there. They had only partial success on the first day. On the 16th, with an increasing number of adherents, the men went in procession to the City, passing the offices of the London and India Docks Joint Committee in Leadenhall Street and returning to the docks. Mr. Tillett and six dock labourers were given an interview with the managers, and in the evening he met the men, who had awaited their return outside the London Dock. With him was Mr. John Burns—just then a public figure by reason of his imprisonment for speaking in Trafalgar Square. Mr. Burns came upon the scene voluntarily to help a movement entirely after his own heart. He was asked to address the multitude of men and convey the result of the deputation. He was selected on the ground that he had a powerful voice, and announced that whilst the Joint Committee would concede the demand that no man should be taken on for less than half a day, they would not give any increase of pay. Mr. Burns had other qualifications for leadership in addition to the demagogic asset of a strong voice, and after this first appearance he immediately became the leader of the movement. But for his intervention the strike might have failed. In the course of the next week practically the whole of the dock and wharf employees in the Port had been brought out, and these were joined by the stevedores and the lightermen, who, coming out at first

ostensibly in sympathy with the docks, became afterwards aggressively active for their own advancement. The managers of both the Millwall and Surrey companies stated in the Press that their men were content with their conditions of work and accused the organizers of the strike of using threats of violence to induce their men to cease work, and cited cases of assault where the men had remained at work. On the whole, however, the behaviour of the men was orderly. The dock directors endeavoured to obtain labour elsewhere by advertising permanent employment at £1 per week, but the response was not satisfactory. At the end of a week's strike only about 250 men were at work, and these men had to be lodged and fed on the dock premises. Meanwhile shipping was entering the Port and traffic was congested. A partial relief of the situation so far as it affected the public was the diversion of vessels to Southampton, but this relief only lasted a few days, as that port had little accommodation suitable for large liners. A much more serious step was taken by merchants as the strike advanced of ordering their consignments to Continental ports such as Antwerp and Rotterdam, and disposing of them there, thus giving an impetus to these ports of considerable advantage to them, though it must be fairly observed that this transfer of business was inevitable, and was rather precipitated than caused by the strike.

The strike commanded the sympathy of the public from the first, it appealed to the men, and it had as its leaders men who had motives for making it a success. The public were impressed with the evils of the casual and contract systems, and they subscribed large sums for the maintenance of the strikers. The men saw the prospect of a 20 per cent. rise in wages. The leaders were intent on founding a trade union for the dockers. The movement received a blessing from an unexpected quarter. The shipowners interested in the principal lines using the Port had for some time been anxious to discharge their own vessels instead of being compelled to entrust the operation to the Joint Committee. For some days they bore patiently with the delays and distractions caused by the quarrel, probably realizing that if the companies gave way the bill would ultimately have to be shared between the merchants and shipowners. Then Mr. Thomas Sutherland, the chairman

of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, wrote to the *Times* criticizing the management of the docks and expressing the opinion that if the shipowners controlled their own work they could do it more satisfactorily, and proposing that a co-operative dock should be established in the Port by the shipowners. This attitude of the shipping interest was the first indication of serious dissension amongst the employers. A further weakening of their position was caused by some of the wharfingers feeling the pinch of loss of business and showing anxiety to settle with the men. Meanwhile other sections of workers in the Port ceased work, partially because of the holding up of ships and goods in the docks and partially because they demanded concessions for themselves. This applied especially to the coal porters and carmen, but in their case the strike was over by the end of August, the majority of their demands having been conceded.

The strike of the dockers continued through August into September. No strike was ever marked by so many attempts of the parties concerned to come to terms. Conferences took place day after day at the Dock House, Leadenhall Street, between directors, managers, and the men's leaders. Whenever an approach to a settlement appeared possible on the majority of the points it inevitably broke down on the question of the additional penny an hour. Exasperated by the obdurate attitude of the directors, the men's leaders issued a manifesto on the 30th August appealing to the workers of all grades and callings in London to refuse to go to work on the following Monday, the 3rd September, if by Saturday the sixpence had not been conceded. The position was now threatening the existence of the metropolis. Yet no intervention on the part of the Government had been made. The line taken by them was merely to hold the ring while the combatants fought out their fight. It was left to the initiative of Cardinal Manning to take the first step which led to the termination of the struggle. On the 30th August he called on Sir Andrew Lusk, the acting Lord Mayor, and together they saw the dock directors with the object of inducing them to concede the demands of the men. For the moment the mediation failed, but it secured the withdrawal of the manifesto for a general strike, and one immediate result was the formation of a committee by

the Lord Mayor (Sir James Whitehead), as representing the City, with the object of bringing about a settlement of the dispute. The members of the committee were the Bishop of London, Sir John Lubbock, Cardinal Manning, and Mr. Sydney Buxton, M.P. Meanwhile the strikers appealed to the public for funds, and especially to the trade unions. Several of the London newspapers also made appeals. A considerable response was made to these appeals in England, but the main contributions came from Australia. £4,000 was sent from Melbourne alone, and the total sum from Australia was £24,000. It was this evidence of world-wide sympathy with the dockers more than any other circumstance that perhaps had more weight in determining the directors in conference with the Lord Mayor's committee to yield the 6d. Even then a hitch occurred by reason of the stipulation of the directors that the 6d. should not come into operation until the 1st January, so as to give time for arrangements to be made for securing additional income by a revision of the rates. The men refused to wait, and after fresh agitation and conferences the date for the commencement of the increased pay was fixed as the 4th November, and work was resumed on Monday, the 16th September. The following is a copy of the document embodying the terms applying to the majority of the strikers concerned :—

TERMS OF AGREEMENT.

1. The 5d. rate per hour to be raised in the case of all labour not piecework on and after November 4th next to 6d. per hour and 8d. per hour overtime. No pay for meal times.
2. Men called in not to be discharged with less than 2s. pay except in regard to special short engagements in the afternoon.
3. Present contract work to be converted not later than November 4th into piecework under which the men will be paid not less than 6d. per hour with 8d. per hour overtime and the surplus, if any, to be equally divided between them all, payments being made to the men under the supervision of the dock officials.
4. The hours of overtime at the docks and Uptown warehouses shall be from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.
5. The existing strike to be terminated and all the men connected with dock, wharf or river work to return to work forthwith.
6. The strikers and their leaders unreservedly to undertake that all labourers who have been at work during the strike shall be unmolested and treated as fellow labourers by those who have been out on strike.

7. In employing fresh men after the strike is ended, the Directors will make no difference between those who have not taken any part in it and will not directly or indirectly show resentment to any of the men who have participated in the strike.

The above terms of arrangement had been fully explained by us to and discussed with the leaders of the strike and are accepted by them.

JAMES WHITEHEAD, Lord Mayor.

HENRY E. CARD. MANNING.

SYDNEY BUXTON.

14th September, 1889.

On behalf of the London and India Docks Joint Committee and by their authority I accept the above terms of arrangement.

14th September, 1889. RODOLPH A. HANKEY, Deputy Chairman.

On behalf of the Millwall Company.

G. R. BIRT.

On behalf of the Surrey Commercial Dock Company.

JOHN H. BOVILL, Deputy Chairman.

On behalf of the men on strike and by their authority we accept the above terms of arrangement.

BENJAMIN TILLET.

JOHN REGAN.

JOHN BURNS.

TOM MANN.

JAMES TOOMEY.

JAMES SULLIVAN.

CHARLES HAVELOCK.

HUGH BROWN.

Witness to the signatures of the representatives of the men on strike.

14th September, 1889.

W. J. SOULSBY.

This strike is known as the Great Dock Strike, perhaps because there has never been a strike in which the public took such a deep interest, indicated by the enormous proportion it occupied in the columns of the newspapers of the month it lasted. As regards the workers affected, it was a smaller strike than the 1912 strike, to be hereafter referred to. Its benefits to the men may be summed up as an increase of pay of 1d. an hour and the substitution of direct employment by the Dock Company for that of contractors. This substitution was, however, never carried out so as utterly to extinguish the contractor, who survives to this day to a small extent with the Port of London Authority, and to a very large extent in the loading and discharging of ships where this is left to shipowners themselves.

The question of casual labour, which had excited the public sympathy, was practically left untouched by the settlement. Merely to stipulate that men should not be

taken on for an hour or two hours, but must be taken on for four hours, was trifling with the subject. One ultimate result of the strike was to make the casual problem a more difficult one than it had been. For the next twelve months labour became difficult to handle. The victory had spoiled some of the leaders, and a policy of ca-canny (that is, "go slow with the work ") had been adopted, at the lower docks especially. Continual small strikes occurred, and pressure was exerted for further concessions, which were granted for a time, amounting to 6d. a day for a large number of workers. The vexatious delays to shipping led to renewed applications from the shipowners to do their own work, and partly out of the weariness of being buffeted between the labourer and the shipowner and partly with a desire to make more money, the London and India Docks Joint Committee agreed to renounce the right of discharging ships at most of the dock berths. It was this act that intensified the casual labour problem. Instead of one pool of employment at the docks, there immediately became twenty employers with their own individual maximum and minimum labour requirements, meaning that the margin of labour had to be multiplied considerably in order to provide for the regular working of the docks. This question is developed in another chapter of this history.

But the outstanding event which issued from this strike was the revival of the organization of the dock and wharf labourers. The leader of the strike, Mr. John Burns, quitted the scene directly his work was done, giving as his parting advice that the men should go and earn the higher wages which they had obtained. The organization was naturally carried out by Mr. Tillett and the other prominent leaders in the strike. The chief union which emerged was that of the Dock Wharf Riverside and General Workers' Union, of which Mr. Tillett became secretary, whilst others were formed of a local character representing the men on the south side of the river, such as grain workers and deal porters. Mr. Tillett's union subsequently developed in the provincial ports, and for a time was relatively stronger at Dundee and the Bristol ports than in London.

Though, as has been said above, the Mansion House Agreement did not of itself provide for any remedy of the

casual labour problem, an honest attempt was soon afterwards made by the London and India Docks Joint Committee to grapple with it so far as they could deal with their own labour as the largest employers in the Port. They decided to have four classes of labourers :—

1. A permanent staff of men with sick pay, fourteen days holiday, and after fifteen years' service entitled to retirement through old age or ill-health to pensions of 6s. to 15s. a week according to length of service. The pension was non-contributory.

2. Registered or "A" labourers, weekly servants with the holiday benefit. Vacancies in the permanent staff to be filled by the promotion of "A" men and in such cases half their services as "A" men was to count for pension purposes.

3. Preference or "B" labourers to have the first call for employment after those on "A" and to be promoted to that class as vacancies occur. The "B" men were given tickets numbered according to their seniority, and to save useless attendance at the dock gates information was published at the gates every evening as to the ticket numbers of the men likely to be wanted the next morning.

4. Casual men to be taken on on the few occasions when the "B" list would be exhausted. They were to be considered for filling vacancies in that class.

Such a scheme provided for the gradual promotion of the individual from the casual class in which he might begin to the permanent class with prospects far better than those of the labourer in other callings. With the exception of strikes of lightermen, there was no general disturbance of peace in the Port between 1889 and 1911, and this may in fairness be attributed to the steadiness of the labour in the London and India Docks systems brought about by this genuine effort to ameliorate the casual labour evil. The new system of labour was subsequently acknowledged by the Board of Trade to be a great advance in the administration of port labour, and it was by far the most important practical contribution to social reform which followed upon the strike.

In 1910 the leaders of the various transport organizations spread over the ports of the kingdom conceived the idea of federating the unions, and succeeded in forming the National Transport Workers' Federation under the presidency of Mr. Harry Gosling, the secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Watermen and Lightermen of London.



INTERIOR OF TRANSIT SHED

In July of 1911 the Federation approached the Port of London Authority with an application for an improvement in the pay and conditions of employment in the Port, chiefly on the ground of increase of cost of living. The Authority agreed to discuss the question with the Federation, and were able to bring into the conference the great shipowning lines and the principal wharfingers. Lord Devonport, the chairman of the Port of London Authority, presided at the conference, which occupied four successive days far into every evening, and the result was that on July 27th an agreement was come to known as the Devonport Agreement. The terms of the agreement were as follows :—

1. That the day rate of pay be raised from 6d. to 7d. per hour. Overtime rate from 8d. to 9d. per hour. Piecework rates of the Port Authority except bulk grain discharging rates to be raised 1d. per hour per man. Subject to the arbitration provided for below, men now receiving 7d. per hour for ship and quay work to receive 8d. and 1d. increase on overtime rates where less than 1s.

2. Day conditions of working to be from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. instead of from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., as hitherto. Overtime rates to commence at 6 p.m. and to run until 7 a.m.

3. Double pay for work on Sundays and statutory holidays.

4. The present arrangements of the Port of London Authority as to dinner time to be abolished and one hour allowed at all departments without pay.

5. No man to be paid off with less than four hours' day or night pay.

6. Times of call of the Port Authority to be four in number at the following hours, viz., 6.45 a.m., 7.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m., 5.45 p.m., and for perishable cargoes any time during the day, due notice having been given at the previous time of call where practicable.

7. Granary keepers' day work hours to remain as at present. Piecework rates to be raised on the same scale as the Port Authority. All conditions of meal times to remain as at present.

8. Working arrangements and conditions to remain as at present.

The following points to be reserved for arbitration :—

1. Whether, in view of the increase of pay granted by the Port Authority and wharfingers, there shall be an increase of 1d. per hour to men at present employed at 7d. per hour and for overtime where this rate is now less than 1s. This is to apply only to the discharge of vessels engaged in the oversea trade where the operation is carried on by shipowners or their contractors.

2. Federation Ticket. Any complaints of the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union against the principle of the Shipping Federation Ticket or the system under which Federation Tickets are issued to be submitted to an arbitrator to be nominated by the London Conciliation Board, who shall decide whether such complaints are well founded, and if so what change in the system should in consequence be adopted. If the Federation are not prepared to adopt any recommendation which the Authority may make, the issue of Federation Tickets is to be discontinued.

[The Federation Ticket question referred to seamen only, and will not further be referred to.]

The proceedings which resulted in this agreement were conducted with perfect pleasantness throughout, notwithstanding the extremely hot weather then prevailing, and no one who was present will forget the demonstrations of cordiality on the part of Mr. Gosling and the other labour leaders, or the compliment paid by them that if employers were only so accessible and reasonable as the Port employers had been there would be no labour outbreaks. The agreement was subject to ratification by the men, and a meeting was called at which Mr. Gosling declared it to be carried. Two days later Mr. Gosling and the other leaders called out the whole of the men employed in the Port, claiming for the dockers a further 1d. per hour. What had caused such a sudden repudiation of the agreement? The only explanation ever given was that Mr. Gosling had rushed his audience in declaring that the motion for accepting the terms had been carried, and that as the majority of the men were dissatisfied, the leaders were bound to follow the men and denounce the agreement. This explanation was only given long after the event. The immediate effect was to render it patent that reliance on the result of negotiations with dock labour leaders was useless. The majority of the dockers responded to the call, including 1,500 of the permanent men of the Port Authority. The men were induced, some by exhortation not unaccompanied by violence, to leave their work, and the hot weather was not without its effect in promoting idleness. Coal porters, lightermen, and carmen, who were utilizing the precedent of the rise already awarded to the dockers, joined the movement. The employers generally had always been willing that all classes in the Port should obtain equivalent increases of wages given to the Port Authority staff, but

were determined to resist any further demands, and the public took the same view and supported the employers. On the 11th August the leaders declared the strike at an end, trumpeting a victory. But the Devonport Agreement was intact at the end of the strike, and remains so in principle to-day. The "victory" was limited to the men having secured from the shipowners an agreement that the men employed by them should be taken on outside the dock gates instead of inside, thus enabling the union officials to bring pressure not otherwise open to them upon the men to join the unions. It appeared subsequently that this concession was only agreed to by the shipowners on the urgent representations of the Government that the then strained relations with Germany made it necessary for them to make some sacrifice in the interest of the State. It was this fact that justified the shipowners in withdrawing the concession when they found the opportunity twelve months later after the crisis of 1911 was over.

Under the Devonport Agreement the question of the extension of the extra penny per hour to certain labourers employed by the shipowners had been left over for arbitration. The reason for the unwillingness of the shipowners at once to fall in line with the general advance of a penny an hour to dockers was never understood by the other employers in the Port, nor was anyone surprised when Sir Albert Rollit, the arbitrator appointed, awarded these men the additional penny. Unfortunately there was left an opening for further dispute, which came to a head in the case of the *Sea Belle*, belonging to Messrs. Leach & Co., where the labourers claimed that the 8d. per hour, which was without doubt originally intended to apply only to the men employed on liners at the docks, equally applied to oversea vessels discharging at river wharves. They were able to carry their reading of the agreement at an arbitration in which Lord Alverstone was the arbitrator.

There can be no doubt that, in spite of the failure of the 1911 strike, the Transport Workers' Federation had gained ground. The officials had so cleverly managed their propaganda as to persuade the men that they had obtained the concessions which the Devonport and subsidiary arrangements had brought them, not by means of peaceful negotiation, as was the fact, but by the strike which

had followed the negotiation. The consciousness of growing strength, or it may be the necessity of maintaining the interest of the adherents of the various unions in their membership, tempted the executive of the National Transport Workers' Union to resume the battle in the late spring of 1912. In the new campaign the avowed object of their action from the outset was the aggrandizement of the Federation by making it impossible for any man to work in the Port unless he was a member of a union affiliated to the Federation. Again the weapon of the strike was employed to carry out the intention of the Federation.

On the 19th May, 1912, certain lightermen refused to work with a man named Thomas because of alleged non-compliance with the rules of the Lightermen's Union. Other transport workers then left work at the instigation of the Federation leaders without formulating any demands, without expressing any grievance, and, where agreements existed, without giving the notice required by the terms of their agreement. The Government were soon alive to the threatening nature of the action taken, and on the 23rd took steps with a view to the pacification of the trouble by appointing Sir Edward Clarke to make an immediate inquiry into the circumstances attending the disputes. The proceedings began on Friday, the 24th, and finished on the next day. On the 27th he made his report. The Port Authority declined to attend the inquiry, and though some of the other Port interests were present, the proceedings were for the most part limited to questions between the lightermen and their employers. The inquiry was so obvious a political expedient to shelve a disagreeable question that it utterly failed. Things were made worse rather than better, especially as Sir Edward Clarke's report was inconclusive on the facts of the case, and his recommendations were confined to a suggestion that the Board of Trade should, in accordance with existing agreements, decide the differences in the lighterage cases.

By the 27th May work had practically ceased throughout the Port. Not only was the withdrawal of labour accompanied by the demand that no man who did not hold the Federation ticket should be employed in the Port, but it was demanded that it should be obligatory on employers

to coerce their own men, as well as other employers' men, to join the Federation. No question of wages was at first raised, and it may appear singular how such a sudden stoppage of work could be brought about amongst men comparatively unaccustomed to the union whip, merely on what must have appeared to them to be a more or less academic issue. The explanation appears to have been that the Federation had during the winter and spring prepared the ground by the employment of an army of paid delegates, absorbing so much of the Federation funds that no money was ever available for strike pay during the struggle. Carefully organized and well versed in the arts of intimidation, these delegates were able, in order to aggrandize the Federation, to make impossible not only the lives of the men who wanted to work, but the lives of their wives and children in their homes.

Within a week of the 27th May it was clear that if the parties in the fight were left to themselves the employers would be the victors. The conditions were favourable to them. The Federation ticket was not a cause to die for. The British public does not favour the idea of coercing a man for his own benefit, and worst of all from the Federation point of view, there was an abundance of unemployed labour available. Very quickly, labour from all parts of the country offered itself for a rate of wages accompanied by conditions of employment far superior to the conditions in rural districts. By the 3rd June 4,300 men were at work in the docks, and by the 10th these numbers had nearly doubled. A week later, there were 9,600, and the numbers continued to increase week by week until by the beginning of July they reached the numbers required to keep the Port going. The chief inconvenience felt was that caused by the absence of the lightermen, but the master lightermen, their managers, and their staff of foremen were able by co-operation and the waiving of by-laws by the Authority, to give a sufficient service to overcome the difficulties due to the emergency. On the ground that the food supplies must not be endangered by the strike, the Government provided police protection for vehicles used to bring goods up from the docks, and they also dealt firmly with cases of intimidation where they could be proved.

As soon as it became manifest that the battle was a lost

one, the men's leaders changed their policy. To stiffen the men they let the Federation ticket retire into the background and put forward fresh demands for higher pay and uniform pay, and also for shorter hours of work. The demand for a uniform rate of pay proved to be bad tactics, because few men in the Port except those on the lowest scale favoured it. There are degrees of aristocracy even in dock labour. With these demands a campaign of obloquy against the employers was entered upon, culminating in outrageous personal attacks upon Lord Devonport. The public were begged to bring pressure upon the employers, and pathetic pictures of women and children struggling with starvation were drawn by orators on Tower Hill, especially by Mr. Benjamin Tillet. His appeals were much discounted by the attacks in the *Daily Express* to the effect that while he spent his days in this class of oratory, his evenings were occupied in pleasant personal enjoyment. Towards the end of the campaign a final effort was made to induce the trade union organizations to proclaim a general strike, but the unions failed to make any response.

While these efforts to keep the battle going were bound to fail, a more subtle attempt to cover the consequences of defeat was made by the Federation approaching the Government with the object of securing their intervention and obtaining a form of settlement to which the Government should be a party. Proposals were made with the countenance of the Government for the formation of an Association of Port Employers to meet the National Transport Workers' Federation from time to time to adjust future differences that might arise. The Federation would thus achieve a recognized status in the Port for future discussions on labour questions and have been able to point to this achievement as well worth the sacrifices of the fight. It was part of this programme of settlement that all the strikers should be taken back into their old positions with their privileges and that the free labourers who had saved the situation should be got rid of. The Government, feeling bound to put forward any proposition likely to heal the quarrel, endeavoured to induce the employers to meet the men's leaders, and there were many interviews between members of the Cabinet and the employers. Amongst the prominent members of the Ministry engaged were Mr.

Lloyd George, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Sydney Buxton, and Mr. John Burns. It was not without interest in this connection that Mr. Burns had led the great strike of 1889 and that Mr. Buxton had been a mediator in that strike. To all the proposals which were put before them by Ministers and their subordinates for obtaining a settlement which should in some way let the strike leaders off easily, the employers always gave the same reply, and it was this: They would have no dealings with the Federation whilst its leaders were the men who had repudiated the Devonport Agreement of 1911 three days after it had been signed, or with any organization that made as a condition of port employment an unqualified submission to the rules of trade union officials. They intended to retain every man who had come into their service during the strike and who wished to stay. They could not ignore the fact that during the previous twelve months their servants had repeatedly struck and had been forgiven and reinstated, and they would only agree that these men would be re-employed as vacancies occurred. A resolution was carried in the House of Commons on the 1st July, on the motion of Mr. O'Grady, that it was desirable that the employers in the Port of London should meet the strikers, but the employers ignored the resolution. There was, in fact, no public opinion to back the resolution. The employers had themselves struck against the pressure of the Government and the strike of the men was dead. It lingered on officially during July. The Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, who had been away in the Mediterranean visiting the Fleet, had really settled the strike on his return by advising Mr. Gosling to let the men go back, and the termination came by a simple order from the leaders that the men should return to work on the 29th July.

A few of the strikers had drifted back to work meanwhile. Many of them never offered themselves for re-employment. The newcomers who were efficient were made permanent where they desired to stay, and were not thrown aside as mere strike-breakers after they had served their purpose. As to the balance of the strikers, they got back in most employments with the loss of the pay not earned during the prolonged fight.

In the case of the Port Authority such a serious view was

taken of the conduct of the men, some of whom had within a year broken their agreements on three occasions, that it was decided to reorganize the permanent labour staff and meanwhile to reinstate strikers only as labourers on the "B" list. This reorganization scheme came into effect in October, 1914, and is the basis of to-day's organization. It was as follows :—

- I. (a) Engagement terminable on either side by seven days' notice.
- (b) Wages 28s. per week of eight working hours between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., rising to 29s. after two years and to 30s. after two more years. Overtime at rates of Devonport agreement.
- (c) Six days' leave annually in addition to statutory and proclaimed holidays.
- (d) No sick pay. (This is provided by National Insurance.)
- (e) No pension, but Authority will consider exceptional cases for retiring allowances.
- (f) Every permanent labourer to be transferable from one dock to another.
- (g) Participation by men in piecework as required.
- (h) 3,000 permanent labourers to form first staff (since increased to 4,000).

II. Preference Tickets to be issued to selected extra labourers on same lines as the "B" class of labourer under scheme of 1889.

Men on the existing permanent staff and the strikers were allowed to join the new scheme on special terms, which, as they applied to transitory circumstances only, need not be recorded here.

Deal porters and overside corn porters were excluded from the scheme, chiefly on the ground that they were averse from accepting conditions which necessitated regular attendance at work.

The course of the strike had raised again the whole question of decasualization of labour, and the Authority while they were carrying out their reorganization also reviewed this question, especially having regard to the obligation cast upon them by the Port of London Act to take it into consideration. A suggestion that it should be dealt with by the establishment of Labour Exchanges at the docks had been considered in 1910. A further suggestion involved the adaptation of the Liverpool Dock labour scheme to London. The first suggestion had broken down through the refusal of the shipowners to be parties to the

establishment of Labour Exchanges. As regards the second suggestion the Authority were informed by the Government that the Liverpool scheme had not put an end to labour troubles there and had also contributed nothing towards the problem of decasualization, there being times when numbers of men were unemployed at Liverpool, whilst plenty of work was offering and no men available or willing to accept it. Moreover, many of the London union leaders were against the Liverpool scheme. The Port Authority felt that the Port of London Act was ineffective for the purpose of dealing with decasualization, as, while it laid upon the Authority the duty of doing certain things by themselves or in co-operation with other bodies, it provided that no one should be deprived of any of their rights, so that if the other bodies refused to co-operate, the Authority were precluded from acting. The new organization of the labour staff would reduce casual employment to a minimum so far as the Authority's labour was concerned, but the Authority felt, further than that, nothing beyond what was possible from the force of example could be done by them in the absence of statutory powers. The Government were duly informed of the view of the Authority. Meanwhile the war temporarily solved the problem.

In the following chapters the developments affecting labour during the war and the relation of this important question to the future prosperity of the Port are discussed at some length. It may be generally stated here that no outbreak of unrest involving strikes has taken place in the Port since July, 1912.

CHAPTER XXXVI

The Port of London from August, 1914 till the end of 1920

I. EFFECT OF THE WAR ON TRADE.

THE first rebound in the mind of the public after the momentous decision of the 4th August, 1914, was a sudden anxiety as to the position of our oversea trade during war-time with its possibilities that supplies of food and other necessities would be delayed in their transport to the country and involve scarcity and, perhaps, famine. The country had, in respect of some articles of food, lived from hand to mouth, notably in the two important articles of wheat and sugar. Some amount of panic was at once created, and the nervous members of the public, rich and poor, began to besiege shops with the object of laying in stocks of food against any evil time that might arise. Prices were at once raised and to avert this natural effect of the panic, the Government on the 7th August fixed provisional maximum prices for the principal articles of food. Considerable help in calming the public mind at this critical time when everyone was unstrung with the seriousness of the situation was afforded by the Port of London Authority in communicating through the Press almost daily, reassuring information as to the actual state and prospects of food supplies. On the 7th August it was pointed out that the stocks of imported meat were double those held two months previously, and that though the stocks of grain were, as usual in August, comparatively small, a fine harvest was being reaped. The convinced opinion was expressed that with so many Continental ports closed, London was bound to have a large accession of business. An instalment of such vessels carrying grain and other foodstuffs had already been diverted to London and were lying at Gravesend on the afternoon of that day. Every indication showed that as the war proceeded, produce of all kinds would have to come to the United Kingdom as the producer must realize his produce and the only



'THE ROYAL ALBERT DOCK, 13TH AUGUST, 1914

free markets would be the British markets. The precedent of the Napoleonic wars was cited to show that London, being the safest of the great ports, would receive the surplus stocks of the world. By the end of August all tendency to panic had been dissipated. In the four weeks following the declaration of war, the receipts of foodstuffs in the Port of London had been considerably in excess of normal imports, especially grain. Forty-eight vessels had been diverted from Continental ports to London, most of them with captured German cargoes. The stocks of food in the London dock warehouses had never been so large. Stocks of meat were 60 per cent. above the average, wheat was 150 per cent., maize 200 per cent., barley 600 per cent. The only exceptions to the general prosperity of the Port were in the export trade and amongst the small vessels running to the near Continental ports. The situation as regards sugar had been eased by the Government purchases of 250,000 tons in Java, of which 20,000 tons arrived in London during the early days of September.

During the whole of the autumn the receipts of food and goods of all descriptions continued to gain on the deliveries. The warehouses were full, and goods which could not be absorbed, blocked many of the quays, both in the docks and at the riverside wharves. Some of the activity was attributable to the transfer of regular services from Southampton, and some to the fact that regular shipments of foodstuffs and of equipments and accoutrements manufactured in England were being made for the French and Russian governments. But the more important additions to the ordinary export operations which made all hands busy were in connexion with the packing of immense quantities of sugar, maize, oats, wheat, and barley for British troops in France, and the vatting and bottling of the whole of the rum for the Army and Navy. The outstanding feature of the import business during the late autumn was the enormous arrivals of sugar. In pre-war time most of the sugar supplies came in regular weekly instalments by Continental steamers, and went straight to the grocer or manufacturer. At first, the circumstances of war required that the whole year's supply should be imported within four months, and the problem of housing the sugar pending consumption was found to be a difficult

one not only in London but in Liverpool, Bristol and Greenock. By the middle of January there was congestion of all descriptions of shipping in all the ports, perhaps less in London than at the others. Grave complaints arose in all quarters. Vessels were kept waiting for berths, and at one time there were as many as forty vessels held up at Gravesend. The position in London had been worsened by the weather in December, the records showing that the rainfall had been continuous and the heaviest in quantity for many years. The quays were never dry during the whole of the month. Such goods as tea, butter, sugar, and frozen meat could not freely be landed under such conditions, and overtime would not be worked as labour was getting short and the docks had to be darkened at night by military orders. Amongst other causes of congestion were the Customs regulations for the defence of the realm, the sudden requisitioning of steamers by the Admiralty, sometimes necessitating the turning out of a cargo directly after it was loaded, and the occupation of sheds and warehouses by the War Office and Admiralty for war purposes. The position in London was not, however, without hope. The law of averages should give the chance of better weather, and the growing daylight, longer working time. But the Port Authority was able to give even more substantial assurances by the imminent bringing into use of some of the new accommodation forming part of the programme of improvements begun in 1909. Four sheds at the East India Import Dock taking 25,000 tons had just been finished, as also the new jetty warehouse at the London Dock, holding 30,000 tons. For shipping, two new berths at the West India Dock had been made available, and four others could be completed in twelve months. The East India Import Dock would be re-opened in three months' time giving berths for eight steamers. One new berth for the largest class of vessel had been completed at Tilbury, with two others in rapid construction. Anticipating a later programme, the Authority had put in hand two sheds at the South West India Dock, and these were to be completed within two months. The Authority had also in hand the extension of the Albert Dock due to be completed in eighteen months' time, giving eleven berths for the largest ocean liners. They therefore contended that so far as

they were concerned the question of congestion was but a passing one and that they would soon be able to deal in London with a trade far larger than that which was responsible for the extraordinary pressure. In any case they were in a position to promise that unless there were urgent requirements beyond those in sight, there would be great relief by the end of January.

The enormous increase in the forces sent abroad with even greater forces in prospect, made the maintenance of the flow of traffic through the ports of the kingdom a question of vital importance to the nation, and in the early part of 1915 the Board of Trade appointed an Advisory Committee of members of dock and railway authorities of the kingdom to investigate the causes of the congestion, and to propose measures of relief. Lord Devonport, Mr. J. G. Broodbank and Mr. H. T. Moore represented the Authority upon the Committee which sat through February, March and April, with Lord Inchcape, the chairman of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, as chairman. Sir Eric Geddes was also a member of the Committee. The Committee quickly reported. They advised that the Government departments should give stringent orders for the avoidance of detention of rolling stock at sending or receiving stations, that a system of common user of railway wagons at docks should be adopted, that representatives of port authorities and other transport interests should hold regular meetings at the chief ports in order to co-ordinate their efforts for the removal and prevention of congestion, that the Sugar Commission should vacate all quayside sheds and warehouses wanted for goods in transit, and either take accommodation elsewhere, or make arrangements for the erection of temporary storage, that incoming cargoes of sugar should be diverted to ports which were not congested, that the Admiralty and War Office should be requested to revise their arrangements with a view to the more economical use of the accommodation they occupied, and that the War Trade Department and Customs and Excise should be invited to facilitate the issue of licences and permits for the clearance of goods and generally to reduce the obstructions to the shipment of export goods.

The policy of the Authority was to meet the abnormal

demands on London and elsewhere by the provision of additional space in the Ports themselves. They regarded this as in every way economically preferable to one of the alternatives suggested of forwarding goods to inland centres for housing immediately they arrived at the ports. Such a method would have meant a wasteful journey on the railways for the goods, and in many cases, a return journey to the port of discharge at a time when it was desirable to keep the railways as clear as possible for the transport of troops and munitions. They continued to carry out this policy with great energy in spite of the growing disabilities of scarcer supplies of labour and materials, and they completed in twelve months about 2,000,000 square feet of accommodation, thereby providing additional storage for 300,000 tons of goods.

During the greater part of 1915 the resources of the Port of London were taxed by the heavy and irregular arrival of goods. The demands upon the Authority may be best measured by the fact that the number of dockers employed on the quays and warehouses, which was normally about 4,500 before the war, was now constantly above 7,000, and sometimes beyond 8,000. The export trade especially was carried on under great difficulties by reason of the lack of shipping tonnage offering for mercantile purposes. But by the end of 1915 the congestion in the Port had disappeared. Co-ordination of working had been effected with wharfingers, shipowners, railway companies and lightermen. The Government had commenced to restrict imports, and lighterage and van facilities had improved. Valuable assistance was afforded by a number of motor lorries lent by the War Department for the delivery of goods from the docks, but undoubtedly the chief source of relief was to be traced to the additions made to the storage and transit facilities at the docks.

The clearance of the congested areas was in no way due to any falling off of business. This appeared at the time difficult to reconcile with the fact that the tonnage entering the Port continued to show a marked decrease as compared with the previous year. The answer given was that a ton of shipping of the day represented far more in cargo to London than it did before the war. For several years previously, the practice had been growing of shipping

companies discharging part cargoes in London, then going on to Antwerp and Hamburg to finish discharge and partly load there, and then coming back to London to finish loading. A large amount of shipping which counted as two entries before the war only counted once during the war, and any tonnage comparison suffered accordingly. But the cargoes manipulated and stored in London from each ship were double what they were, because full and not half cargoes were dealt with.

The Committee on Congestion at the Ports having completed its labours, the ports were for a time left to shift for themselves. But on the 1st November, 1915, the Government, realizing that executive action had become necessary to secure the regular maintenance of the transit facilities at all the ports, appointed the Port and Transit Executive Committee by an Order in Council, with powers to issue directions for regulating the traffic at the ports and harbours of the United Kingdom for the purpose of preventing congestion. The powers conferred upon the Committee placed the whole of these undertakings under their control for all purposes in the same way that the railway undertakings had been made subject to the control of the Railway Executive Committee. Lord Inchcape was appointed the first chairman. The Committee was formed chiefly of representatives of Government Departments, and included Sir Norman Hill, of Liverpool, and Mr. Broodbank, of London, but no other ports were represented. The Committee had its first meeting on the 4th November, 1915, and remained embodied until the spring of 1921 for the purpose of assisting the ports in dealing with congestion of traffic which occurred after the cessation of hostilities. Lord Inchcape retired from the chair on the 23rd July, 1917, and was succeeded by Sir Norman Hill, who remained the chairman until the end of 1919, when he was succeeded by Sir John Barran. During 1917 the Committee was enlarged by the addition of several representatives of labour and fresh recruits from the new Government Departments. The policy of the Committee was from the first as far as possible to leave the administration of the ports in the unfettered hands of those responsible for their management. Only in rare cases have the Committee exercised the autocratic powers vested in them, and then only after

exhaustive inquiry into the circumstances attending each case. Their business has been by means of regular returns supplied to them to satisfy themselves that the flow of traffic through the ports is being kept free from obstruction, and in cases of failure, by mandate or suggestion to secure that result as quickly as possible. Three of their principal executive acts should be dealt with here :—

First, the direction that all imported goods which might appear to any authority to impede the flow of trade should, if not removed within forty-eight hours of notice given, be either removed and stored at the cost and risk of the owner, or be subject to penal rates of 1s. per ton for first seven days, 2s. per ton for the next seven days, and 3s. per ton after fourteen days. This direction was given to meet cases chiefly in outports where merchants were blocking quays and sheds by taking advantage of the relatively cheap statutory rates of Port Authorities as compared with the higher rates claimed by private stores and carriers under war conditions. The power has only rarely been applied in London, and in most cases the offender has been a Government Department.

Secondly, the direction that a prescribed form (known afterwards as "the pink form") indicating that certain particulars required by the Customs regulations should be filled up and lodged with the Authority before consignments of export goods could be received into the sheds, the object being to prevent the blocking up of the sheds by export goods before Customs regulations had been complied with.

Thirdly, the formation in 1916 of the mobile Transport Workers' Battalions. These battalions consisting of soldiers, were organized by the Committee for the purpose of providing labour for Port work when the civil labour was insufficient for the purpose. The battalions proved immensely useful, as civil labour was drawn upon by the authorities for military service abroad, in preserving the flow of traffic in the ports. The first battalion experimentally organized was 700 strong, and styled the 16th (Transport Workers' Battalion) York and Lancaster Regiment, and it was largely recruited from men who had been employed as dockers in civil life. Local committees, consisting of one representative each of the Admiralty, War Office, Port Authority and Labour were constituted at each of the ports and these



ROYAL ALBERT DOCK BASIN
Photograph by the Aircraft Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

committees considered applications of employers for a contingent of the Battalions, and decided whether the applications should be recommended for approval. The Battalions were never permitted to work where civilian labour was available, only being allowed to supplement the existing supply of labour. It was in no sense a strike breaking weapon for the employer to wield. The utility of such a mobile body in times of irregular congestion was so obvious that advantage was bound to be taken of it, and the first battalion was never able to keep pace with the demands made upon it. Four more battalions were soon sanctioned, and by the end of the war the number of the men had been raised to 15,000, and the scope of their usefulness had been extended to the railways, canals and ironworks. The employers had to pay for the services of the non-commissioned officers and men of the battalion at the current rates applicable to dock workers (no charge being made in respect of officers) so that no question of undercutting labour could be involved. One of the most satisfactory features from the beginning was the excellent relations existing between the civilian and military docker as they worked together in the speeding up of national transport. As a war weapon it combined the merits of discipline in working, speed in action, and economy in cost. The battalions have repeatedly been employed in the Port of London both by the Port Authority and the wharfingers, sometimes as many as 1,000 being engaged in the Port at one time. They have been put to all kinds of work, including the difficult task of deal portering. They proved teachable and their spirit was excellent. Demobilized, they should prove a most valuable asset to the transport service of the country.

During the whole of the year 1916 the activity of trade in London which had marked 1915 continued, and the volume of goods dealt with, was practically about the same, though the tonnage of shipping that paid dues indicated a further falling off. The measures taken by the Authority in 1915 to cope with the increasing trade had proved efficacious in preventing congestion and there were no delays or difficulties due to that cause. With these measures, coupled with the advent of the 'Transport Workers' Battalions, just alluded to, London was now secure against the evils of congestion.

All risks, however, of this evil being repeated in 1917

disappeared with the inception of the ruthless submarine campaign and its success in sinking many millions of tons of British and neutral vessels. By this means the Port of London during 1917 suffered severely in the losses of shipping and goods on the voyage home, and even more severely from the policy of the Government in deciding, as part of their protective measures, to divert large volumes of traffic to other British ports. This course was apparently adopted in response to agitation in the House of Commons following upon the loss of a ship with food which had called at Falmouth for orders and had been torpedoed outside that port on her way to London. The argument used in the agitation was that the vessel ought to have been discharged at Falmouth, and the cargo sent by rail to London, and developing this line of reasoning pressure was brought upon the Government to consign all ships to West Coast ports and dispatch the cargoes to London by rail. The West Coast was further from the submarine bases and also possessed some of the most commodious ports in the kingdom. The argument left out of consideration the fact that the concentration of ocean-going traffic in the Irish Channel would be offering a larger target to the submarines. The Admiralty were doubtless seized with this obvious result, but the number of destroyers available was at that time not sufficient to escort convoys up both the Irish and English Channels, and the Government therefore yielded to the clamour and proceeded to make wholesale diversions of traffic to the West Coast. At one time they contemplated the diversion of the whole of the East Coast traffic to the West Coast, and appointed a Committee, chiefly composed of railway and port experts, to submit detailed arrangements for carrying out such a scheme.

This Committee reported that such a diversion was only practicable to a limited extent. Some of the conditions of the problem seemed simple to solve to those unacquainted with the working of traffic, and it may be well to deal with them here. Most of the West Coast ports were already being fully utilized for Admiralty and War Office purposes. Their geographical position and facilities had dictated this use. Where they were not so used it was because the accommodation was unsuitable, and if they were unsuitable for war traffic they were equally unsuitable for merchandise. As

an instance, what was the value of the highly efficient coal hoists employed in the shipment of coal at South Wales for landing frozen meat or bulk grain? More important were the questions of depth of water for deep-draught ships and the capacity of the transit sheds. New port accommodation could not be improvised by the waving of the wand of a magician, especially in war time when all construction work was hampered by the system of priority necessarily adopted. Organization, staff and labour for working for new undertakings were even more difficult. In such circumstances the experience of London in regard to congestion during the year 1915 would be intensified at the Western ports. The greatest problem was, however, not to be found at the port of discharge, but arose in the transit and distribution of the cargoes. If cargoes were all of one description such as grain in bags and intended for one merchant only, the cargo could reach its destination easily. But unfortunately the cargoes coming to London from the Colonies and America consisted of every class of goods mixed in the holds of the vessels. There were often 500 consignees interested in one American cargo. Therefore it would be necessary to land the whole of the cargo and sort it before delivery. The sorting would not be carried out at the port of discharge as, if it were attempted, there would in any case have to be a further sorting in London. The whole cargo would therefore have to be placed in trucks as it came ashore and sent on to London by rail. With one cargo alone of 15,000 tons about 3,000 trucks would be required, occupying about twelve miles of railway. The railway depots in London already overcrowded, could not possibly handle such a traffic, and the only accommodation available would be the dock sheds in London, and it is undoubtedly to the docks that the train loads of cargo would be forwarded. Here again was another difficulty. The dock sidings and sheds had been designed to receive import cargo from the water side, and not from the land side. Nor could sheds be spared for the long time they would be occupied between the first arrival and final delivery if full cargoes had to be dealt with in the sheds, instead of part being delivered overside. When, at last, some weeks after the vessel had discharged at the outport, the last consignment of the cargo reached the docks, the real process of delivery to the

consignee would only have just begun. Let the incidence of cost, of delay and especially of the wastage and spoiling of food resulting from such arrangements be considered, and it will at once be seen that the regular supply of food to London would be disastrously crippled. The truth is that the effects of interfering with existing methods of distribution even in peace are inconvenient and confusing to a degree not realized except at such times as those of the dock strike of 1912. It seemed better to lose a vessel occasionally than adopt the alternative proposed, though to the uninstructed lay mind of that time, it seemed better still to have provided ample protection to mercantile shipping while sailing in the danger zone.

During the autumn and winter of 1917 the policy of the Government in regard to the diversion of shipping traffic from London remained unaltered, and the returns of the Port indicate the severity of the losses sustained. They show that in the year ending 31st March, 1918, there had been a reduction of nearly 29 per cent. in the shipping tonnage entering the Port as compared with the previous twelve months, and of nearly 20 per cent. in the goods handled by the Authority. Though in adopting the diversion scheme it had been proposed that the cargoes should still come to London, this was not carried out in practice. Attempts were made to distribute goods such as tea direct from the Western ports, instead of using the London market, the idea being to avoid unnecessary rail carriage. London lost this lucrative class of business, but it also lost even more severely by the fact, that, to save rail transit, provisions which would have in the ordinary course served for London supplies, were disposed of at the ports of discharge to the advantage of the outport population at the expense of Londoners. This is one of the explanations why the difficulties of food supplies in London and the South East of England were so accentuated in the winter of 1917-18.

Representations were made to the Government on behalf of the Authority and by the leaders of port labour as to the unwisdom of continuing the policy of diversion, but any suggestion for immediate change was resisted on the ground that the demands of the Admiralty were still too onerous to allow of more warships being spared for convoying merchantmen up the English Channel. The Government

attitude was stiffened by the events at the Front in March, 1918, which threatened the safety of the French Channel ports and the entire closing of the Straits of Dover to mercantile shipping. The question, however, had become such a grave one for London, that on the initiative of Mr. J. D. Gilbert, M.P., a member of the Port of London Authority, it was earnestly taken up by the London Members of Parliament, and strong representations were made by them to the War Cabinet.

Judged by its results the London members' intervention was successful. The Government gave assurances that no unnecessary diversions would take place, and promised that as more escorts would soon be available a larger share of the traffic would be despatched to London. The position at the Front also became stabilized, and on the 15th July began the series of operations which terminated in the capture of Zeebrugge and the final victory of the Allies. But even in April, 1918, the tide of traffic began to turn towards London, and as the months passed it flowed stronger and stronger, until by the end of 1918 something like an equal distribution of trade was being made between the East and West Coasts. With the month of May, 1918, began arrivals of American troops in the Port of London, and by the end of November, 114,000 had been landed in the Port from ninety-five vessels. Though it is fair to acknowledge that the circumstances of the end of 1918 were more favourable to London than those of the end of 1917, the intervention of the London members was justified both by the circumstances at the time and by its results.

II. OPERATIONS CONNECTED WITH DEFENCE.

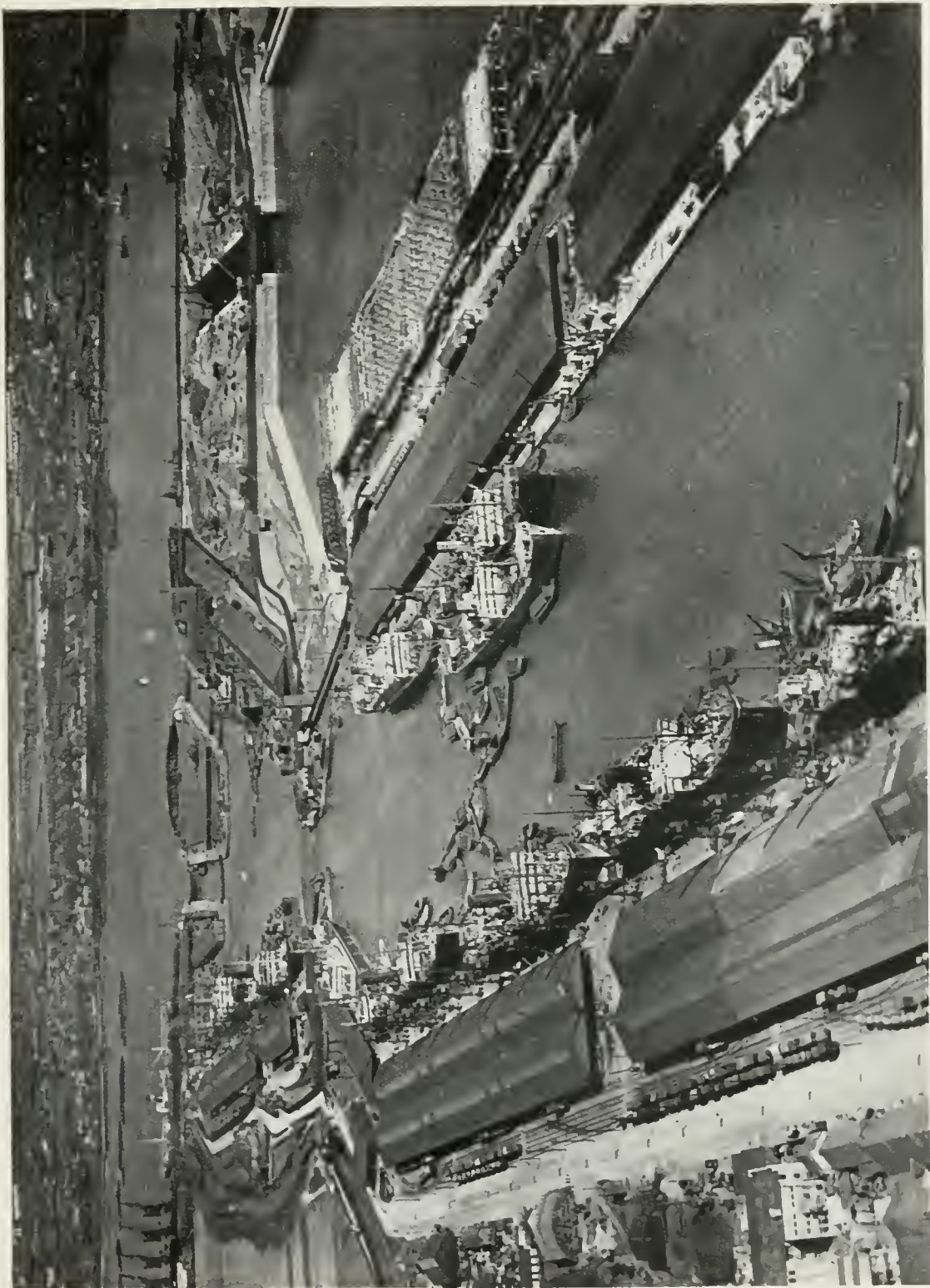
Early in October, 1914, the Port Authority were requested by the Military Authorities to construct a pontoon bridge across the Thames between Gravesend and Tilbury. By continuous working day and night the approaches and the bridge, with a removable section 600 feet wide for the passage of navigation, were completed within the one month specified, and on the 15th November a trial of the bridge was ordered by the Army Council. At this trial, which was in all respects satisfactory, the bridge opening was closed in 3 hours 19 minutes after the receipt of instructions, being 41 minutes less than the four hours

provided for. The navigation passage was restored in 2 hours 8 minutes. The Authority maintained tugs and staff always in waiting to close or open the passage at any time. The bridge was dismantled immediately after the armistice was signed.

From time to time the Authority placed their dredging plant at the disposal of Government Departments, twenty-six vessels having in all being chartered to the Government. The vessels were used, some in dredging operations connected with defence works in the north, some were adapted for carrying cargo, and others were converted into oil tankers for bunkering purposes at sea.

In July, 1915, the Authority, at the request of the Munitions Department, undertook the manufacture of 18-pounder shells. Volunteers were called for, and the work, which was carried out chiefly after ordinary working hours, was continued until the temporary shortage was made up.

In the numerous air raids made upon the metropolis the docks and warehouses of the Port have always been one of the objectives of the invaders. Yet, though damage was done to house property by enemy aircraft in Poplar and several children killed, the property of the Authority and the wharfingers remained practically immune from damage throughout the war. Only a few German bombs ever descended upon their premises, and these either dropped into water or upon open ground. Only one bomb actually struck a building, and the total of damage to the Authority's property inside and outside the docks occasioned by the enemy and by our own aircraft defence guns amounted to £3,239. The strict carrying out of the lighting regulations at the docks and the adequate anti-aircraft equipment provided by the War Office were probably the chief factors in securing this immunity from attack. The nature of the construction and contents of the dock warehouses made them in many ways suitable for air-raid shelters, but for obvious reasons they were not places where it was possible to admit indiscriminately the public who would be likely to use them. No general permission could therefore be given to the public to resort to the warehouses during the raids, but in consultation with the local and police authorities certain premises at the London and St. Katharine, Millwall and Victoria Dock, with proper sanitary accommodation,



ROYAL ALBERT DOCK
From a photograph by the Aircraft Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

were reserved for the public during raids, and many thousands of people took refuge therein under the supervision of the Authority's police.

Torpedo nets were fitted in front of every lock gate at the river entrances to the docks, whilst the entrances themselves were regularly patrolled, at first by soldiers and later on by the Authority's police.

III. LABOUR.

The labour question in the Port was naturally one of the most difficult problems of the war. The facilities for rapid transport at the ports were essential to the campaign, and the Government, recognizing this from the first, made the occupation of transport worker exempt from the conscript call. When the war broke out a large number of port workers were called up to the Army and the Navy because they were reservists or in the Territorial Forces. A further withdrawal took place, when many volunteers responded to the appeal of Lord Kitchener. When the Government wanted transport workers at Havre and other French ports, about 1,270 London men were enlisted for service there, still further depleting the staffs of the Authority and other employers. Other men left for the munition works in the neighbourhood, drawn there partly by the laudable patriotic impulse of more direct service to the Army and others by the higher pay offered. One feature of the early methods of recruiting for munition work adopted by Government Departments created much criticism, and has had evil effects throughout the war and since. This was that instead of approaching the employer and endeavouring to arrange with them to spare a portion of their mechanics, the Government agents took the short and easy course of tempting men to leave by offering dazzling wages, often standing outside the gates of East End engineering establishments and soliciting men as they entered or left the works. The worst immediate effect was the discontent engendered in the minds of the workers left behind. The ultimate effect was to encourage the general unrest and demands for higher wages everywhere in skilled and unskilled trades. It must be said to his credit that so far as the docker was concerned he was one of the last class of worker to put forward claims for war bonuses. By February, 1915,

the higher freights of shipping had been followed by higher prices for food, and an application was made on behalf of the dockers for an advance of wages to meet the increase in the cost of living, and a war bonus equal to 3s. per week was agreed to at the end of the month. By July, 1916, the cost of living had increased again, and a further bonus equal to 6s. per week was agreed to. Two further rises were given in 1917, one in April of 3s. per week and another in December of 6s. per week. These four war bonuses totalled 18s. per week, and were given by the Authority in consultation with the other employers and the men's representatives. This 18s. applied to ordinary dock and wharf workers. The other classes of port employees had proportionate increases. In March, 1918, the National Transport Workers' Federation suddenly put forward a claim on the Government for a war advance to be standardized at 8d. per hour over pre-war rates (equal to 32s. per week approximately), and it was referred to the Committee on Production, who invited the employers in the ports to the hearing of the case. The invitation was declined by the London employers. The Port Authority in a letter to the Chairman of the Committee pointed out that no application had been made to them by the men or by the labour members of the Authority as to any grievance affecting wages, that the claim for standardization was against the known sentiment of the workers, that no claim as to enhanced cost of living had been raised, and that the proposal of the Federation was advocated merely on the ground that the men were entitled to exploit the economic position in the critical state of the nation's fortunes. The Authority called in aid the report of the Select Committee on National Expenditure recently issued. This report had pointed out that the succession of fresh cycles of wages advances was vastly increasing the cost of the war, and had recommended that the strongest case should be required to be established before any advance of wages was conceded on any ground other than the rise in the cost of living. The Authority, therefore, felt justified in taking the stand that until a Government Committee which had just been appointed to inquire specifically into the cost of living had made their report they would give no countenance or be parties to any proceedings. Though the reason was not stated in the correspondence, the Authority

was largely influenced by the conviction that the Committee on Production was not a judicial body, and that they were merely agents appointed by the Government to dole out to the men such increases of wages as might appear to be necessary from time to time to keep the men quiet. The Government felt forced by the action taken by the Authority to proclaim the Port of London as a district where a difference existed for adjudication under the Munition Acts, and this was followed by a hearing where no evidence was tendered by the Authority and an award equivalent to another 8s. a week bonus payable from the 6th May, with a further bonus for overtime work. A new application was heard in October, 1918, when again the employers were practically not represented for the same reasons as had influenced them in the spring, and again an award for the men, this time equivalent to 6s. When the armistice was signed on the 11th November, 1918, the total of the war bonuses given by agreement were therefore equal to 32s. a week. To provide the funds to pay this extra wage and the many consequential increases to lightermen, carmen, and other port workers, and also to pay for higher wages in the maintenance departments and the higher cost of stores, it became necessary from time to time to increase the tariffs of rates and charges on shipping and goods, and by the end of 1918 the tariffs were 85 per cent. in excess of those in force in 1914.

The character of the labour employed necessarily suffered during the war by the losses through enlistment in the early stages of the war, and by the fact that no young men were available to fill vacancies. The numbers of the men had to be increased for the work done because of the inferior quality, but on the whole it may be said that the labour was more efficient at the close of the war than in 1915 or 1916, experience having benefited the men who had come in. But for the creation of the Transport Workers' Battalion the supply of labour available would rarely have been equal to the work on hand.

Though there has been much restlessness due to the crude processes by which it has been attempted to meet the increased prices of food by periodical war bonuses, it must be fully acknowledged that during the war the dockers generally did recognize their responsibilities as a vital link in

the equipment and feeding of the Army and civil population and worked to the best of their ability. The only serious exception to the rule in the early stages of the war was the action of certain stevedores and men employed by ship-owners who saw the opportunity of getting a regular Saturday afternoon holiday and availed themselves of it during the rest of the war.

When the Derby scheme of recruiting was started in October, 1915, the importance of retaining sufficient transport workers for efficiently carrying out the work of the Port was pointed out to Lord Derby by the Authority, and it was agreed by him that the arrangements to secure this end should be made through the Authority. It was decided that such men on enlistment should be starred in groups and at once placed in the Army Reserve and sent back to their civil occupation, and that all applications for the release to private employers of men inadvertently detained by recruiting officers should be vouched by the Authority. The Authority thus acted as a clearing house for the whole of the transport workers of the Port. This arrangement lasted until May, 1916, when the work of exempting transport workers from military service was taken over by the London Shipowners and Transport Workers Military Service Committee, which consisted of representatives of the following bodies :—

- Board of Trade.
- Port of London Authority
- London General Shipowners' Society
- London Shipowners' Dock Committee
- London Short Sea Traders' Association
- London Chamber of Commerce
- Association of Public Wharfingers of the Port of London
- London Cartage Contractors' and Horse Owners' Association
- London Master Stevedores' Association
- Association of Master Lightermen and Bargeowners
- Steamship Owners' Coal Association.
- Representatives of Transport Workers' Unions
- Military representatives

The chairman of this important committee was Mr. J. B. Wimble (now Sir John Wimble, K.B.E.), and it was largely due to his ability and impartiality that the duties of the committee were carried out with satisfaction to all the interests involved. This committee after the cessation of



INTERIOR OF STORAGE SHED

hostilities was entrusted with the arrangements for releasing transport workers from the Army in the general demobilization.

Immediately after the armistice an agitation was commenced for a shorter working week for dock labourers, the men having in view a national half holiday on Saturday throughout the country. No objection was raised in London to the Saturday half holiday so long as the men were willing to work for 48 hours during the week. The National Transport Workers' Federation voiced the men's demands and asked that the question should be settled on national lines, and not locally. The demand was accompanied by the condition that there should be no reduction in pay for the shorter working week. Numerous informal conferences took place between the Federation and employers from various ports, and in the end, owing to the pressure put upon them by the Ministry of Labour, the demand was in effect granted by the employers as from the 24th April, 1919. In the case of some employers where the hours had substantially exceeded 48 per week a compromise was arrived at in settling the new rates of pay. Though the concession involved considerable cost to the Port of London Authority and other London employers, no addition to the charges of the Port was necessary as the conditions of trade were then so prosperous that the burden could be met out of the current revenue.

In October, 1919, the National Transport Workers' Federation, in pursuance of their policy of endeavouring to obtain national settlements of wages, made an application to all port employers with demands, the principal of which were that the minimum pay for day workers and piece-workers should be at the rate of 16s. a day for the 44-hour week, and that pay for overtime should be at the rate of time and a half. Though such a serious demand obviously required treatment by the employers on national lines, no national employers' organization was in existence. The employers at the leading ports, with London at the head, decided after consultation to form a Provisional Committee, with Lord Devonport as chairman, for dealing with the emergency, and eventually agreed with the Transport Workers' Federation to accept the offer of Sir Robert Horne (then the Minister of Labour) to let the question be

threshed out before a Court of Inquiry under the Industrial Courts Act, 1919. The Court was constituted as follows :—

THE RIGHT HON. LORD SHAW OF DUNFERMLINE (Chairman)
SIR JOSEPH G. BROODBANK
SIR LIONEL FLETCHER
HARRY GOSLING, ESQ., C.H.
A. PUGH, ESQ.
FREDERIC SCRUTTON, ESQ.
JOHN SMETHURST, ESQ.
BEN TILLET, ESQ., M.P.
ROBERT WILLIAMS, ESQ.

The inquiry opened on the 3rd February, 1920, and there were twenty public sittings, the evidence being concluded on the 11th March. Sir Lynden Macassey, K.B.E., K.C., was the principal spokesman for the employers and Mr. Ernest Bevin for the labourers. The Press soon dubbed Mr. Bevin as the Dockers' K.C., and the skill and thoroughness with which he conducted his case entitled him to the compliment. There were fifty-three witnesses. The men's case was based broadly upon the claim that they were entitled to a higher standard of life, that the industry could afford this, and that in view of the casual nature of their employment they were also entitled to maintenance during the time they were idle. The employers resisted the demands upon the ground that the dockers were, relatively to other industries, sufficiently well paid by the existing minimum of £3 4s. 2d. a week, and that the increases of pay given during the war had been followed by a most serious falling off in output. Seven members of the Court, namely, the chairman, the four labour members, Sir Lionel Fletcher, and Mr. Smethurst, reported in favour of conceding the 16s. demands, though Mr. Smethurst qualified his assent by objecting to a minimum wage, but was in favour of a substantial percentage advance on earnings. Sir Joseph Broodbank and Mr. Scrutton declined to sign the report and submitted a report of their own.

The majority report summed up the results of the inquiry as follows :—

1. That with a view to establishing a national minimum standard (to use the words of the claim) the minimum for day workers and pieceworkers should be 16s. per day on the basis of the national agreement for the 44 hour week.

2. That a system of registration of dock labour should be introduced into all the ports, docks, and harbours of the kingdom.
3. That the principle of maintenance of unemployed casual labour is approved.
4. That wages of dock labour should be paid weekly and that this system should be introduced at the earliest possible date.
5. That the constitution of a national joint council and its correlative and local bodies should be undertaken for the dock labour industry on the lines of the Report of the Whitley Committee.
6. That these bodies should, failing agreement by the parties, be charged with the settlement of the incidental matters mentioned in this report, and of the remaining items of claim.

The majority report confirmed the correctness of the employers' complaints as to the falling off in output and breaches of contract on the part of the men, but relied upon the hopes held out by the men's leaders that increased output would follow increased wages and upon a broad appeal to the honour of the men.

The minority report pointed out that to raise the minimum pay of dockers to 16s. a day would make it nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ times what it was before the war, and that the concession, if given, would, as the Prime Minister had indicated in a recent demand of the miners, be followed by demands from every grade of skilled workmen in the country, and create a new vicious circle still further inflating currency and enormously increasing the cost of living. Sir Joseph Broodbank's and Mr. Scrutton's suggestions for dealing with the situation were :—

(a) That the rise in prices since the rates of wages were last fixed in October, 1918, warrants a further immediate increase in the present rates.

(b) That a scheme of maintenance should be at once jointly considered, and after its effect on the ordinary rates of pay has been estimated the parties by agreement should fix permanent standard rates of pay.

(c) That pending such agreement (and in no case before the 1st January, 1921) no reduction should be made in the rates of pay.

(d) That having regard to the experience of the 44 hours' agreement related at length in that report, better output would not be secured by merely giving an all-round increase of wages irrespective of results actually achieved, and that in many cases existing piecework rates might be increased in the hope of encouraging better results.

The employers, after consideration, decided to accept the majority report as a whole. Negotiations with the

National Transport Workers' Federation were opened, and an agreement was signed on the 5th May, 1920, under which as from the 10th May the minimum of 16s. is applied to the majority of the ports and 15s. to certain of the smaller ports.

The increase in pay to the labourers necessitated corresponding increases to other sections of the Port establishments, the total being estimated at £15,000,000 per annum for the country, of which about one-third was referable to London. The liability thus incurred was transferred to the consumer by an increase in the rates and charges for port services. In the case of the Port of London this was achieved by increasing the all-round war addition of 85 per cent. to 150 per cent.

The employers proceeded to establish a permanent organization of their own, and in the following July the National Council of Port Employers was formed. Certain members of this Council have been appointed to meet representatives of the men for the purpose of dealing with labour problems in the Port, and thus constitute the first Joint Industrial Council for port labour.

IV. SPECIAL WAR REGULATIONS.

The Authority during the whole of the war undertook the charge of the secret examination service on the river of all incoming vessels, the officer in charge being Captain Kershaw, the harbourmaster of the lower section of the river. The Authority's police force co-operated with the Government Aliens' Officers in carrying out orders affecting enemy and friendly aliens in the prohibited area of the Port. It was felt that the docks were the chief channel in London for the conveyance of intelligence to the enemy, and a large number of persons, not aliens, whom it was considered undesirable to allow in the docks were prohibited from entering altogether. As the dock statutes permit the public to enter or leave the docks freely so long as they have business to transact there, the performance of this duty required great care and circumspection on the part of the police in the scrutiny of persons passing through the dock gates. It also necessitated a registration system adapted to the differing circumstances of neutral and enemy aliens and questionable characters of British origin.



WOOL ON SHOW, LONDON DOCK

The control of alien crews of vessels, who provided the chief danger of communication to the enemy, was nominally maintained by Home Office officials, but the whole of the executive work was carried out by the Authority's police, including the conduct of all charges and prosecutions. This work proved to be one of no little difficulty, the more so in that in deference to the supposed wishes of the shipping community the duties had to be carried out with little attempt at strictness. Real segregation of alien ships' crews was scarcely enforced until the middle of 1918. No alien was allowed to pass over lock gates, and an additional safeguard of these vulnerable points of the dock system was the prohibition of passage over them by the general public except to certified employees of firms engaged on work of national importance. The control of all permits to take photographs or drawings in the dock and river jurisdiction of the Authority was also vested in their police. Even more responsible work was thrown on the police in the guarding of the many thousands of tons of explosives passing through the docks. Minor but indispensable services were rendered by the police in attendance at the embarkation and landing of troops and the use of the Authority's ambulances for the conveyance of wounded soldiers and sailors and returned prisoners of war.

The following figures express in terms perhaps more easily understood, the extent and value of the police services of the Authority :—

| | <i>Number</i> |
|---|---------------|
| Aliens registered | 3,381 |
| Aliens arrested and convicted | 488 |
| Prosecutions for sketching, etc. | 19 |
| Dock passes issued after full inquiry | 164 |
| Lock passes issued | 799 |

These arrangements were organized with high ability by Mr. E. Stuart Baker, the Authority's chief police officer.

V. RATES AND CHARGES ON GOVERNMENT SHIPPING AND GOODS.

Immediately upon the declaration of the war the Authority approached the Government with regard to the payment for the services and accommodation at the docks for transport, with the result that an arrangement was made with

the Admiralty, based upon that made with the London and India Docks Joint Committee at the time of the South African War, which provided for payment in full of dock tonnage rates on ships and an agreed schedule of charges for the special services accommodation and facilities required by the Government. Three months later the Admiralty suddenly terminated the agreement and claimed complete exemption under the Harbour, Docks and Piers Clauses Act, 1847, for all Government ships, including hired transports, proposing in substitution an *ex gratia* payment of 75 per cent. of the rates leviable on the mercantile marine, and further demanding that in respect of goods handled for the Government the dock charges should be based on the out-of-pocket expenses of labour alone, allowing nothing for wharfage or as a contribution towards interest on capital. The effect of submitting to the application of this principle to the shipping and goods then under Government control would have been sufficient to endanger the payment of interest on the capital of the Authority. If it had remained in operation until the end of the war, when about 90 per cent. of the services to goods and shipping were on Government account, the Authority would have even with its reserve fund defaulted in its interest by the end of 1915, and have been hopelessly bankrupt and unable to carry on. The same treatment was in contemplation for the whole of the port authorities in the kingdom. Remonstrance with the officials of the Treasury was made, the authorities pointing out that Parliament could never have intended the powers under the 1847 Act to be so abused as to give the community the free use of ports in the middle of war, which had diverted practically all shipping and food imports into the hands of the Government, and also pointing out that while private firms whose works were taken over for war purposes were being accorded arrangements giving them large profits, undertakings managed by public authorities strictly for the benefit of the public were to be starved and ruined by the application of a statute obviously designed for normal peace conditions. No redress being obtained from the officials, the authorities, in concert with Members of Parliament representing the constituencies in which the principal harbours and docks were situated, sought and obtained the opportunity of

approaching Mr. Asquith as a deputation. The deputation was received on the 17th February, 1916, and after hearing Lord Devonport and other members of the deputation, Mr. Asquith undertook to consult with the Departments concerned with the object of arriving at terms of payment which could be accepted on all hands as reasonable and just. Months of negotiation ensued ending in the following offer being made by the Government to take effect from the 4th August, 1914, and accepted by the Dock and Harbour Authorities :—

| | <i>Percentage of ordinary tariff.</i> |
|---|---|
| I. In respect of ships. | |
| A. Port and Harbour Dues. | |
| (a) for ships belonging to the Royal Navy and ships requisitioned during the war for naval use as transports, mine sweepers, patrol ships, etc. | |
| (1) Port harbour and dock dues where vessels have the use of berths in open or closed docks or at other quays or jetties in the port | 75 |
| (2) Port and harbour dues in open harbours where use is not made of the facilities specified under (1) above | nil |
| (b) For requisitioned and prize ships engaged in discharging and/or loading grain, sugar, timber, meat, and other goods which are not munitions or naval or military stores . . | 100 |

B. Payments for Services.

Graving dock rates and payments for tonnage, towage, crannage, water, light, power, labour and all other specified services to be in accordance with the ordinary tariff applicable to such services.

II. In respect of Goods and Stores.

On all goods loaded into and/or discharged from all ships, including requisitioned ships, the Government to pay the rates, dues, and charges payable in accordance with the ordinary tariff in force at the port, harbour, or dock concerned, that is to say, the Government is to be put on the same terms as a large importer or exporter dealing with similar quantities under similar circumstances.

This arrangement, though not giving the authorities all that they considered they were entitled to, was on the whole satisfactory to the larger ports. Some of the smaller ports had been so denuded of business by the war that even had the Government terms been more generous the authorities would still have found it impossible to maintain

their position and these cases were met by an undertaking of the Government to favourably consider hard cases.

It may be recorded here that the many thousands of tons of gifts and comforts for soldiers and sailors and refugees sent home or abroad were handled or stored during the war at the docks of the Port of London Authority free of charges. This concession was even applied to such consignments as the 200,000 bags of flour, part of the immense gift from Canada in the early days of the war.

VI. WORKS AND PLANT.

War had the effect of seriously modifying the programme of improvements and new works which had been adopted by the Authority. Briefly put, it may be said that whilst works in that programme approaching completion in August, 1914, were allowed to proceed, those not so forward have been seriously delayed. Further works not contemplated, but necessary to meet war emergencies, have been carried out promptly. Some of the programme works completed during the war have already been mentioned earlier in this chapter. Others in this category included the important new store for frozen meat at the Royal Albert Dock, with part of the adjacent meat store, the new cold store in Smithfield, the new ferro concrete jetty with double storey transit sheds in the London Dock, the extension of the Tilbury Main Dock, and the great installation of forty-three electric cranes for the Royal Albert Dock. The works carried out for emergency purposes were mostly in the nature of shed and warehouse accommodation for goods.

The programme works which suffered great delays from priorities given to other war work in the country were the deepening of the river, the extension of the Albert Dock and the river jetty at Tilbury.

River deepening was stopped early in the war owing to the difficulty of obtaining labour and to the acquisition of most of the dredgers by the Government. The river jetty at Tilbury was in the hands of contractors who found themselves continually handicapped by lack of labour and material and made slow progress. In the summer of 1918 the contract was cancelled by agreement and the Authority is now carrying on the work with some hope of the early completion of the jetty with the more favourable conditions of peace.

The Authority viewed the completion of the Albert Dock extension as of great national importance and continually brought all the pressure in their power to secure the priorities for steel and other materials, but these priorities were persistently refused until the summer of 1918, when the Government, requiring increased dry dock facilities for the repair of torpedoed vessels, approached the Authority with an offer to give the necessary priorities and to pay them a sum of about £200,000 to secure early completion of the dock and dry dock. The circumstances of the offer necessitated the cancelling of the contract entered into with Messrs. Pearson. This has been done and the work is being rapidly proceeded with under the direction of Mr. C. R. Kirkpatrick the chief engineer of the Authority. It is anticipated that the connexion with the main Albert Dock will be ready for passage of vessels by the summer of 1921, thus giving access from that date to the new dry dock of vessels of about 12,000 tons. The new river lock will probably be available for use about the same time, and then both the new wet and dry docks will be available for vessels up to 35,000 tons. It is a part of the arrangement made with the Admiralty that all the dry docks of the Authority shall be furnished with cranes and pneumatic compressors, and this work is proceeding.

One unexpected series of works of reparation on a large scale were thrown upon the Authority by the Silvertown explosion on the 19th January, 1917. A vast amount of damage was caused to the buildings in the Victoria Dock by the calamitous explosion. Many sheds were blown bodily down, others were set on fire and burned to the ground, and nearly every other building in this area had their doors and roofs damaged. The clearance of débris and the re-erections and repairs occupied nearly two years, and the claim of the Authority on the Government who accepted liability for the effects of the disaster was settled for £250,000.

Amongst a number of various minor works carried out for war purposes were

(a) The construction of the landing stages in connexion with the ferry used by munition workers between Gallions Jetty and Woolwich.

(b) The supply of ballast for the making of concrete in defence works on the South Coast.

- (c) The widening and strengthening of the Cattle Market at the Deptford Supply Reserve Depot of the War Department.
- (d) Sheds for the War Office at Tilbury and Royal Albert Dock.
- (e) Many salving operations in the raising of sunken vessels, including one gunboat.

VII. SERVICE OF PORT AUTHORITY'S STAFF WITH H.M. FORCES.

The members of the Authority's staff who were called up or volunteered for service with His Majesty's Forces up to the armistice numbered 3,542.

Of these 397 lost their lives in the defence of their country, 717 were wounded or disabled through illness.

Many distinctions were gained by members of the staff including two Victoria Crosses.

The number of casualties amongst the men drawn from the Port as a whole is not known, but approximately it may be taken as about five times the number referable to the Port Authority.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS.

The canteen arrangements for workmen at the docks have long been far from ideal. The general movement throughout the country during the war for an improvement in the conditions under which meals are served to workers was extended to the docks, and the Authority in co-operation with the Liquor Board and the Young Men's Christian Association erected several temporary canteens in the docks for the entertainment of the largely increased numbers of men employed there during the war. Besides adopting these temporary measures, the Authority erected two permanent canteen buildings (one at Tilbury and the other at the Albert Dock) over which they are exercising direct control through their hotel manager, having in mind also the possibility of extending that control to the whole of the refreshment arrangements in the docks.

During the summer of 1915 to 1918 inclusive the Authority provided a steamer for trips for wounded soldiers on the Thames. A second steamer was provided by a committee of the members of the Authority out of funds derived from private sources during the last three of the summers. In all 50,705 soldiers were carried. The management of the trips was in the hands of Mr. F. Carbutt,

acting on behalf of the British Red Cross Society. None of the many excursions given to soldiers appears to have met with such favour on the part of the men and there was universal testimony from the commandants of the hospitals as to the beneficial effect of these trips on the health of the men.

During the war period the Port Authority were able to bring about a revision of the arrangements between themselves and the public wharfingers in regard to rates. The many agreements in regard to dock companies and sections of the wharfingers, every one of them in different terms, were abolished. In their place was set up the Port of London Working Association, the object of which is to secure that all merchants transacting business in the Port shall be charged the same rates for equal services. The governing body is a joint committee consisting of eight members of the Authority and an equal number of wharfingers, the chairman of the Authority being the chairman of the Association. The complicated details affecting individual rates are discussed and settled by sectional committees, subject to the final approval of the joint committee. The articles provide for the provisional maintenance of existing arrangements where loss of business would have followed to any individual wharfinger, but these exceptional cases have been reduced to very few in number, and will, it is believed, soon disappear, and it may be said that the adhesion of wharfingers to the principle of the Association has been so general that for all practical purposes there is now a single tariff applicable throughout the Port. There is no fear that the joint committee will develop into a ring to the detriment of merchants inasmuch as merchants are safeguarded by the Port of London Act. One most useful measure adopted by the Authority during 1920 was the promotion of a Bill which became law for unifying and consolidating their powers.

CHAPTER XXXVII

The Future of the Port

THE pages of history show that with few exceptions once a great community establishes itself on a site, that site permanently remains a dwelling place of crowded humanity. The vicissitudes due to war and other destructive agencies or to the starting of rival communities may temporarily dim the prosperity of the inhabitants, but the conditions which originally attracted men to settle on the site reassert themselves with the passing away of the adverse influences. Thus we have such old cities as Paris, Moscow, Rome, Athens survive through the ages the direst effects of fire, pestilence and sword. Even Carthage, the classic example of the deadly vengeance of its implacable foe, has risen again in its suburbs and become the modern Tunis. Even more distinctly is this principle illustrated in the case of ports which have served generations as international channels for the distribution of merchandise. The prosperity of such ports may ebb and flow with the circumstances of the trades which use them, but they almost universally continue to serve their original purpose. To select the oldest instances, Marseilles, Genoa, Athens, Alexandria, Constantinople, Bristol, Southampton have been ports since the countries in which they are situated had a corporate existence, and they are to-day in the first rank. London is perhaps the outstanding example of this persistence of adherence to its original function in the commonwealth, and London has been less subject to fluctuations of prosperity than any of the other great ports of the world. We may judge therefore from its 1,900 years' history which this work is attempting to record that the future of the Port of London is as secure as the future of any human institution can be. Even though the British Empire should have been disintegrated and despoiled as the result of the late struggle it is impossible to believe that the Port of London, with its natural advantages enhanced by the expenditure of many millions on facilities, would have ceased to occupy its pre-eminent position as a market or



FLOUR MILLS, SOUTH SIDE OF ROYAL VICTORIA DOCK

distributing centre. But with the triumph of the Allied forces and the extension of the Empire's power and influence, we have the prospect of increased commercial operations in the chief port of the Empire, and as a consequence an augmentation of shipping and merchandise there, which should, as the years proceed, bring an increment of trade to the Port enormously beyond anything that has hitherto been dreamed of.

London will remain, as it has long been, the chief international market for Eastern and Colonial produce. The most valuable of its imports has for many years been Colonial wool, an inversion of the conditions of its earlier history when wool was its chief export. Many attempts have been made by rival ports to capture the wool trade of London. British ports like Liverpool and Hull have endeavoured to cajole merchants with the argument that a saving in carriage between London and Yorkshire could be brought about by discharging Colonial wool nearer the point of manufacture. The Germans before the war bought largely in the Australian markets and shipped wool direct to German ports. America and Japan have also bought direct and continue to do so. Our home manufacturers also adopt this practice to a limited extent. But the fact remains that by far the greater part of such wool as is not bought in Australia is sent to the London wool warehouses and put on show for sale there, and buyers from all parts of the world congregate there with the knowledge that in the vast supplies laid out for inspection on the floors of the London warehouse, they will have a greater selection to choose from than at any other point in the world, that their individual requirements will be satisfied at the ruling market price, and that they will receive what they have bought and paid for.

Tea has been a practical monopoly of the London market ever since its importation began. During the war for the purpose of saving shipping tonnage and railway transit, considerable quantities of tea were sent to northern ports and distributed from there. The scheme was not a success even as a war measure, and though the Port of London suffered, the consumer suffered even more. There was disadvantage by reason of the ignorance of the methods of managing the business. This might have been cured

by experience, but the blending and packing and distribution of teas had been centred in London, and also the financial operations, and it was not easy to move these important items from London at a moment's notice. Hence much confusion and loss of quality and quantity at the expense of the community. In some cases it was found that tea landed at Liverpool was being sent to the south of England, whilst consignments landed in London were dispatched to Yorkshire, thus defeating the objects of the Food and Shipping Controllers in departing from the ordinary methods governing the business. What has happened during the war has proved so clearly that the trade practice was founded on principles of utility that no other evidence is required to justify the assurance that the tea trade will remain a London one.

Rubber is relatively a new trade. Wild rubber finds its way to Liverpool but the cultivated product, plantation rubber, has its market in London. This trade is one which must inevitably grow.

Another modern article of import, immensely increased in volume during the last five years has been liquid fuel in the form of mineral oils and spirits. Vast tanks for the reception of petroleum and petrol have been erected on the banks of the Thames at safe distances from the City, and yet with such facilities for distribution that the conveyance from the tank to the receiving station in London can be performed at an infinitesimal cost per gallon. This trade is certain of expansion.

The Port of London has always been the chief mart for imported goods used in highly specialized and luxury trades. Thus we find there the markets for articles of medicine, such as bark, rhubarb, ipecacuanha, jalap, iodine, etc., for spices, such as cloves, nutmegs, mace, cassia and cinnamon, and for all the valuable working metals such as copper, tin and quicksilver. The luxury trades include carpets, feathers, silk and silk piece goods, china ware, ivory. All these imports are so closely identified with the industries of the metropolis that their development with the increasing influence of the British Empire cannot be questioned.

But in point of volume and weight the largest trades are those which arise out of the consumption of commodities

by Londoners themselves, and the population which is served from London. Most of the coal for London under normal conditions arrives by sea, and it is an ever-increasing proportion. Corn, including wheat, oats, maize and barley, reaches London by sea. Under war conditions more wheat has been grown in England, but no one anticipates that the conversion of pasture into corn lands is anything but a temporary measure. Imports of wheat still continue to arrive in enormous quantities, and it may be assumed that so far as these imports are in excess of what is necessary to compensate for the deficiencies still left in spite of the improved home supplies, they will be used to maintain a higher reserve in the Ports than that which was thought sufficient in pre-war times. Sugar, meat, butter, cheese, bacon and other provisions, with fruit, wines and spirits also represent large tonnages in the imports of consumables. Timber, both the hard wood and the soft wood types, arrives in the Port of London in fleets in the summer season when the Baltic and St. Lawrence, free of ice, allow navigation to penetrate to their inmost recesses.

As the permanent population in and around London grows with an ever-increasing number of visitors, the demand for all these commodities must increase, and with it, the demands upon the Port must be greater. Railway transit from Channel ports may be serviceable to the metropolis in the case of certain perishable goods of high value coming from the Continent, and where products originate in the interior of England that mode of transit will chiefly be resorted to, but for the great proportion of commodities the sea route into London is the cheaper, the more convenient, and, in fact, the only practicable route. Whilst the automatic developments of the production of raw materials and food in the territories of the East and the Colonial possessions will tend to maintain the pre-eminence of London in those trades, there are recent indications that a larger share of the Canadian and American trades will make London their headquarters.

In connexion with the importation of raw materials, it must be remembered that the London area is the largest manufacturing district in the Kingdom. No single London manufacture is equal in importance to the cotton or wool manufacture of the northern counties, but the aggregate

of the enormous variety of factories in London exceeds that of any other district. Amongst the articles so produced in London are flour, furniture, pianos, chemicals, sugar, rubber goods, motors, margarine, paper, biscuits, paints, varnishes, oils, matches and electrical fittings. The majority of the factories are not directly associated with the docks of the Port, but the raw materials reach them through it, and the finished article that is exported leaves London through its Port. On the waterside itself, many factories are, however, erected and utilize the facilities afforded there and at the docks. Notable instances are the flour mills of Messrs. Rank and Messrs. Vernon in the Victoria Dock. The capital value of the waterside factories in the Port was ten years ago officially estimated by their association at £100,000,000, a value that has probably been more than doubled since that time by additions and the increased value due to higher prices. Though the advantages of the waterside factory on the Thames have not yet been fully exploited by manufacturers, there are unmistakable signs that those engaged in new enterprises are realizing those advantages. Evidence of this is to be gathered from the recent erection of the huge factory for the production of margarine by the Maypole Dairy Company and the installation of Messrs. Vickers Maxim's works at Erith. Consider the factors which make the Port attractive to the manufacturer. A deep river allowing vessels to discharge raw materials and fuel alongside the factory; the biggest produce and labour market in the world at its doors; and barge transit which is by far the cheapest in the country, available for the whole length of the river and its canalized tributaries. Vessels from every port in the world come into the docks where delivery or shipment can be made by barge free of dock charges for imports or exports. Trunk railways for the whole of Great Britain with waterside depots within easy and cheap reach of the factory, and the great Continental ports of Antwerp and Rotterdam within twelve hours' steaming. To this let it be added that the Port charges proper payable in London on vessels and goods are on the lowest scale of any of the great ports, and are negligible in their effect on the cost of manufacture. Even in the matter of fuel, the position of London is not so unfavourable as it is usually considered to be. Coal is brought by colliers

from South Wales or the North, and the rates of freight prevailing in normal times enable the best coal to be placed alongside the Thames factory at a cheaper cost than in many manufacturing districts which are served by rail carriage. With the dearer cost of production now applying to coal and with the prospect of even heavier cost, it may ensue that liquid fuel will largely supplant coal for factory use as well as for shipping, and in this event, London will be equal in point of fuel supplies to any other port and superior to those inland districts which are now benefited by the presence of coal mines at their doors. Allowing, however, only for the maintenance of the present relative cost of fuel in London and coal producing districts, the other factors of advantage which are set forth above show such a balance of consideration in favour of London as a manufacturing centre that its progress is certain, and with this progress an advance in the user of the Port, both for imports and exports.

It is to the increase of manufactures that the Port must look for an extension of its export trade. Whilst the Port has been first in regard to the volume and value of imports, its exports have been considerably below those of Liverpool which has benefited by the immediate proximity of Lancashire and Yorkshire factories. Even, however, with its disadvantage of distance, vast quantities of goods for exports are forwarded to London from the North, but it cannot be too strongly emphasized that to maintain even its present relative position, let alone improve it, London must more and more utilize its river side for factory development.

The one exception to the general advancement of industries on the Thames, viz., that of shipbuilding and ship-repairing has already been referred to. The loss of the business had its commencement in the substitution of steel for timber as the material of construction, and while Londoners could but lament that an industry so long their pride was threatened, the event was one which arose in the course of evolution of the industry. What has, however, given rise to a much keener sense of disappointment is that it was not in the inevitable nature of things that the whole of the business of shipbuilding and ship-fitting should have disappeared from the Thames. Whilst the ordinary cargo steamship could be built more economically where coal

and iron were found in the same neighbourhood these elements of cost did not so much apply to vessels where the interior organization and fittings were of a complicated and special character, and there was no reason why the yards where such vessels were constructed should not to-day be even busier than they were fifty years ago. Unhappily, masters and men were apparently not able to meet the new situation with the energy and skill which is so often stimulated by adverse conditions, and the shipbuilding industry left the Thames. The only explanation ever offered was that the workmen had insisted on conditions that their Clyde and Tyne competitors dispensed with. The demands on the Port for the repair of British vessels damaged in the war seem to provide the opportunity for reviving shipbuilding on the Thames. A beginning has been made in the improvement of the facilities for ship-repairing in the Port, but few dry docks exist for this purpose in the Port. The Port Authority's docks are only available for ordinary painting and cleaning between voyages. The best of the private docks are unable to accommodate the largest liners which, if requiring repairs involving lengthy stay in dock, have to proceed to a northern port for the purpose, with the consequent delay, risk and expense. The recent decision of Messrs. Harland & Wolff to commence shipbuilding and ship-repairing work at the Royal Albert Dock is an event that promises a resuscitation of London's lost trade in this respect.

Another section of traffic in which the future presents possibilities is the passenger traffic in the Port which has almost disappeared in the upper reaches of the river. The busy scene of lively human traffic which marked the Pool for centuries is peopled now only by cargo steamers and lighters and their crews. It is regrettable that the river service initiated by the London County Council was abandoned. Mr. J. D. Gilbert and his colleagues on the Rivers Committee of the London County Council, who initiated the service in 1905, made an error in telling the public that the enterprise would at once be a remunerative investment. They should have relied on the ground of utility and amenity. No one can gainsay that on those grounds the service was well worth the rate of one-fifth of a penny in the pound which it cost the ratepayers. But



SHIPBUILDING AT LIMEHOUSE. "THE PRESIDENT" ON THE STOCKS
Painted and engraved by W. Parrott, published March, 1840, by Henry Brooks

the conduct of the Moderate Party when they came into power in abolishing the service in 1909, and in selling for £18,000 the thirty steamboats which cost £200,000, is defensible on no ground that can commend itself to anyone who is not a slave to the narrowest theories of party politics. With suburban trains becoming more crowded and vehicular traffic making greater demands upon London streets, the conclusion is irresistible that in spite of their unhappy experience, the London County Council will be driven to consider the question of reviving the steamer service on the Thames Highway. Co-operation between the Council and the Port Authority might secure a better and more remunerative service than that of 1905, and is, in any case, desirable for complete success. The only passenger services remaining are a few small up-river excursion steamers running in the summer, the ferry service between Tilbury and Gravesend, and the summer services to Thanet and East Coast watering places. From the point of view of the Port, the chief consideration arises in connexion with passengers on ocean-going vessels. Here again the glory of the Thames has departed. The river from the Pool to Blackwall was once full of crowded points of embarkation and disembarkation of passengers and emigrants, but no longer serves the purpose. Liverpool and Southampton obtain the greater share of this traffic. Such passengers as sail to India or the Colonies direct to or from London, for the most part embark or disembark by tender in the open river at Tilbury. The Port of London Authority are making strong efforts to revive the ocean passenger traffic on the Thames. In their endeavours to accomplish this it has to be recognized that though London is the destination of most ocean-going passengers the way there by the sea route is not the shortest, and if it is a question of saving passengers a few hours, London cannot compete with Liverpool for passengers from America or with Southampton for passengers coming from any port west of Boulogne. Owners of ocean-going ships carrying no cargo and intended to carry passengers destined for London only, can therefore find no benefit in using the Port of London either for the passengers or for the vessels themselves. Southampton offers better facilities, better even than Liverpool for such traffic. But there is a class of vessel (rapidly increasing in number in late years)

which carries large quantities of cargo and reserves the upper decks for passengers, often carrying 500 to 600. These vessels chiefly trade with Canada and the Australasian Colonies. The speed is not that of the Atlantic greyhounds, though often between 18 and 20 knots, and the fares are proportionately much lower than on the faster boats. With such vessels the cargo is the principal element which governs the decision as to the port of discharge and loading, while the question of saving the passengers a few hours longer on the sea is relatively unimportant. The shipowner in the case of such vessels has, therefore, no particular inducement to incur the delay and expense of calling at an intermediate port to land or embark his passengers if he can conveniently do so in the port to which he is carrying the cargo. It is for such vessels that the Port of London Authority is catering in proposing to erect a floating passenger landing stage at Tilbury. This stage will be available at any time of the tide. It will adjoin the Tilbury Station of the Midland Railway Company which is within thirty minutes' journey from the City, and not more than forty minutes from St. Pancras. Three ocean-going vessels will be able to use it at one time. Its manifest utility and the success which has been achieved with a similar stage at Liverpool make the Authority confident that this venture will prove a welcome addition to the facilities of the Port, and restore London to the front rank of ocean passenger ports.

Amongst the numerous possibilities of expansion in the operations of the Port, there is that of London becoming a transit port for Switzerland's oversea trade. Under the projected scheme, London would be the destination and shipping port for the ocean-going vessels carrying the imports and exports of Swiss traders and manufacturers, the transit to and from Switzerland being by means of self-propelled barges of 1,000 tons capacity running between London and Basle, which would be the distributing centre for Switzerland. In anticipation of the scheme being realized, a large dock is in course of construction at Basle. The projected service would bring great advantage to both British and Swiss traders, as it would replace a service which necessitates three transshipments between London and Basle, viz., at Rotterdam, Cologne, and Strasburg, involving in the repeated handlings, much damage to the

goods and unnecessary expense to the trader. It is essential for the success of this service that the Rhine above Strasbourg should be deepened, and unfortunately the carrying out of this work is being suspended until a final decision is arrived at with regard to the making by the French of a canal alongside the Rhine, which is intended to serve the double purpose of providing a navigable channel for vessels and a source of electrical power for industrial works. As the construction of the canal may take 30 years, and (owing to its huge cost) may never be made, the trade interests of London are anxious that the existing river bed should in any case be regularized and that this should be done at once. Urgent representations to this effect have been made to the British Government by the Port of London Authority and the London Chamber of Commerce.

We come now to the question of accommodation and facilities for shipping and merchandize in their connexion with the future of the Port. Is London prepared with the necessary channels, docks, wharves and other facilities without which the development of a great trade cannot be secured? The general answer to this question is to be found in the programme of improvements already sanctioned by the Port of London Authority and described in an earlier chapter. Its execution has been delayed by the war but even with all the difficulties of the war situation, such progress has been made with the principal dock works commenced before the war that the whole of them are practically completed and are in use. Those which will yield the largest benefit to shipowners and traders are the great extension to the south of the Royal Albert Dock, the extension of the Tilbury Main Dock, the reconstruction of the Tobacco Dock and Quay Sheds at the London Dock, the widening of the lock into the East India Import Dock, and reconstruction of its North Quay sheds, the rebuilding of the sheds on the north side of the West India Dock, and the erection of the Riverside Cargo Jetty at the Tilbury Dock. It is estimated that the completion of these works will provide accommodation for the discharge and loading of steamers of a net tonnage 5,000,000 tons per annum, equivalent to the whole of the annual tonnage of shipping entering the port of Hull. When the entire programme of dock extension at present contemplated is carried out

provision will have been made for a further annual 15,000,000 tons, making a total accommodation to be added equal to 20,000,000 tons. This does not take into account any extension of riverside quays to be undertaken either by the Authority.

Less progress has been made with the deepening of the river because of the diversion of the Authority's dredger and hoppers to war purposes. But though it is an essential part of the programme to deepen the river, the depth already obtained is sufficient to give access to the docks of such steamers as are likely to present themselves for many years to come, and the utmost inconvenience likely to be suffered by shipping meanwhile is an occasional detention of the very largest class of vessel for an hour while the tide is making.

The Authority is determined that all the equipment such as sheds, cranes, conveyors, tugs, etc., shall be of the most modern and efficient type, and that so far as they are responsible, there shall never be any question as to the traders or shipowners having to wait for facilities. In one department of port facilities, however, the Authority has not been able to attain that perfection of service to traders which they have aimed at, viz., that of the railway access to the docks. At the lower docks, viz., the Tilbury, Albert and Victoria, East and West India and Millwall systems, there is direct connexion with the various railway systems. But there are no railways in the London and St. Katharine Docks or at the Surrey Commercial Dock system. Connected with the Great Eastern Railway there is a branch line at Lemn Street which is carried into the East Smithfield depot of the Authority, but though it is carried a few yards further into the Wool Warehouses of the London Dock, it is never utilized in the dock itself, the reason being that up to the present, engineers have not been able to submit any workable scheme for retaining the complicated warehouse system there and at the same time arranging for the line to be continued into the dock or the neighbouring St. Katharine Dock. It is hoped that modern ingenuity in dealing with difficult transport problems may not be permanently baffled in this case. No such physical difficulty, however, applies to the introduction of railways into the Surrey Commercial Docks. Both the South Eastern and Brighton Railway Companies have lines immediately

adjacent to this dock system, and the connexion with dock lines could easily be made. The problem here is the getting of traffic to and from the north side of the river. It is a problem that not only touches dock traffic, but is concerned with the whole of the through traffic between the north and south of England, and it can only be satisfactorily dealt with by the making of new tunnels or bridges across the Thames. The Ministry of Transport may well turn its attention at an early date to the improvement of this manifest defect in the metropolitan railway systems. A suggestion has been made for temporarily dealing with the disability of the Surrey Dock systems in this respect by the employment of a train ferry to and from the Millwall Dock, but the expense appears to be prohibitive.

Whatever our hopes, no one can state with absolute confidence what effect the Allied victory is going to have on the future of the Port of London. Much depends upon the time which elapses before the full industrial activity of Germany and Russia is resumed, and commercial relations with this country re-established. Before the war, trade with both these countries was important to London. So, too, was the trade with Belgium and Holland, which was to a considerable extent of German origin. In spite of the provisions in the articles of peace as to the future relations of the belligerent nations, it seems hardly possible that for several years there can be trade of any great extent between Germany and this country. London and other East Coast ports will be the losers by this suspension of trade exchanges. The loss will appear to be greater than it really is if the tonnage figures of shipping entering London are merely considered by themselves. In pre-war times these figures were, as has already been pointed out, artificially swollen by the practice of shipowners in calling at more than one port on a voyage, the tonnage into London being often counted twice for one voyage by reason of the vessel having been to Hamburg and Rotterdam after discharging her London cargo. Hence the falling off in tonnage figures of shipping will not be the true measure of loss, but will exaggerate the loss. As regards Russian trade, there will so far as can be seen no sentimental obstacle to the resumption of commercial relations, but the conditions of business there are so overshadowed by the vagaries of Bolshevism

that it is impossible even to speculate as to when the ports of the Baltic and Black Sea will find regular traders seeking and bringing freights of cargo. But whether there is or is not to be trade with Germany or Russia in the near or distant future, it is not open to doubt that any deficiencies in London will be made up by additional trade elsewhere. London and the districts it supplies must be fed, and any deficiency in such articles as the sugar which came from Germany and Austria will be obtained from some other sources. We have obtained our sugar supplies during the last four years of the war chiefly from Java, Mauritius, Cuba, and from the West Indies, and huge quantities have passed through London docks and warehouses. These sources and others will equally be available in future with benefit to our tropical possessions. The wheat which we derive from Russia has been supplied from Canada, the Argentine, and the Cape. Provisions which Russia sent us before the war have been replaced by consignments from the United States and Canada. So far as in future we find it expedient to import manufactured or semi-manufactured articles, formerly imported from Germany, we have the markets of Belgium and the United States to buy in. Not only should these supplies be assured, but the British merchant has the opportunity of recapturing some of the entrepôt trade in goods such as coffee, lost by London to Hamburg during the last fifty years. To maintain our world-wide position and to pay the interest on our debt the export trade must be greatly expanded, and the opportunity for this expansion will be the more favourable by the world-wide prejudice against, if not the elimination of, our severest competitor in pre-war times. Much of the work of restoration in northern France, Belgium, and Serbia must of necessity be carried out with materials manufactured and exported by this country. The augmentation of exports involves a corresponding augmentation of imports of raw materials. All these factors will increase the amount of traffic through the ports of the kingdom, and London as the chief port should get the chief share, and all the more so because the vessels which will be employed in trafficking to the ocean ports will be of a larger type than those engaged in the former cross-channel traffic to Germany. It does not appear, therefore, that the position of London will be



NEW DRY DOCK—SOUTH EXTENSION OF ROYAL ALBERT DOCK

endangered by any developments following upon the war, but that if handled with skill it is more likely to be improved.

There still remains to be considered the threat of the competition of the great Continental ports of Antwerp and Rotterdam and later on the ports of Hamburg and Bremen. All of these ports have suffered severely by the war. If German trade is to be reduced in volume these ports will continue to suffer, as German traffic constituted the bulk of the largely increased traffic passing through these four ports in the years before 1914. Many millions have been spent upon the docks by the States owning them. Antwerp may find some compensation by Belgium being able partly to take the place of Germany in manufacturing for export. Rotterdam has no such alternative. Holland has neither coal nor iron for the purpose of manufactures, and the outlook of Rotterdam in regard to exports will therefore be unpromising, whilst such imports as are conveyed into the interior of Germany may be diverted from Rotterdam to Hamburg and Bremen in order that better use may be made of German ports. Threatened by such a loss of trade, both Antwerp and Rotterdam may look with covetous eyes upon the entrepôt trade of London and attack it by means of lowering the rates for port accommodation. This would be an undoubted danger because in the long run the cheaper route or market will prevail. Antwerp and Rotterdam will be helped by the fact that the resources of the State or municipality will be at their disposal, whilst in London the burden of maintaining the Port is confined to the direct users of the Port. If the Port of London in such circumstances is to be left to get on by itself the question will largely be determined by the attitude of labour. It is quite certain that if a substantially lower rate of wages is to prevail at Antwerp than at London the transfer of much of the entrepôt business of London to Antwerp is inevitable. On the other hand, if wages are generally kept up to the higher level throughout the near Continental ports London has little to fear. So far, the wages in Antwerp have nominally kept pace with London war wages, but the currency conditions are so abnormal in the former port that it is impossible to make any forecast as to whether the workers there will be able to maintain the present standard. Should, in the result, there be any marked difference in the relative charges

between Rotterdam, Antwerp, and London, to the detriment of London, it will be a question whether it may not be imperative for the State or the municipality, for a time at all events, to subsidize the Port of London—a consummation which is devoutly not to be wished.

This brings us to the consideration of the vital question of the future of labour in the Port. It may first be remarked that all the features of the effect of war on labour observed in the rest of the community apply to labour employed in the Port. Beginning the war like every one else in a wave of patriotism, determined to sacrifice everything to victory, dock labour left at home, exempted from military service because it was wanted for transport of men and munitions, gradually went the way of so many other sections of society, and by the end of the war was thinking more of what it could make out of the war than of winning it. Who were the first profiteers in the war? Labour gives the credit first to the shipowners and then to dealers in food, and on this, bases its defence for the repeated demands for increased wages to meet the increased cost of living. Labour claims to have said to the Government in August, 1914, "Keep food prices steady and we will keep labour prices steady," and it must be said in favour of this claim that no application for higher wages in London was made by the transport workers until 1915. But it must be added that once the game of demands for war bonuses began, it was kept up unceasingly, and in the long run certain classes of dockers, as represented by their unions, were prepared to be as fine profiteers as any of the shipowners whom they served, without having the checks upon them provided against the shipowners by the right of the State to commandeer shipping and to claim an enormous percentage of their excess profits. The taste acquired of fresh increments of wages, apart from merit of service, bestowed by a Government often offering to be blackmailed, has naturally not been satiated by the cessation of hostilities on the Continent, and further demands have flowed in from transport workers, usually involving more pay for less work. At the date of writing the minimum pay of the least skilled man is 16s. a day, compared with 4s. 8d. before the war. No class of worker can show such an advance. It is unbelievable that such a demoralizing condition of things

can persist in a nation having such vast responsibilities and hitherto credited with steadiness of view and the ability to govern. Some statesmen will arise who will teach the people that the motive that should dominate their life is not "What is England going to do for me?" but "What can I do for England?" If we could not feel that such a reaction is near at hand it would indeed be a hopeless outlook both for England and the Port of London.

No grounds exist for assuming, as is so often done, that port labour in London to-day is in any way more disaffected, more unreliable, or presents more knotty problems than any other form of labour. There are, however, several points connected with it which have to be understood by those who desire to improve its conditions in future and to make it a more stable asset to the Port and Empire.

(a) There is the question of casual labour. So far as the Port Authority's labour is concerned the worst features have long since passed away, and though casual labour is taken on at busy times there is always the prospect of a casual labourer of fair character becoming a permanent servant of the Authority. As regards labourers employed by ship-owners and stevedores, the position of the labourer is sometimes less secure, and a man who gets worn out early in their service may go to the wall, but it must be admitted that many labourers seem to like this employment, accepting its contingencies as one of the risks of the better wages paid and often enjoying the enforced leisure. The ideal remedy for disposing once and for all of the casual labour question would be to make the Port Authority the only employer of port labour. Whilst the wharves remain in private hands this cannot be done, but a great step towards this end would be achieved if the action of the old dock companies in renouncing the right of discharging ships could be reversed. The adoption of this renunciation policy led to the introduction in the docks of a large number of irresponsible employers competing with the dock companies for labour and also with each other. The casual labour question was intensified because a larger pool of labour had to be drawn to the docks to satisfy the varying demands of so many individual employers, leaving a much larger margin in the aggregate of unemployed applicants each day than would be necessary if only one employer

were in the labour market. An incidental but important objection to this system is that it creates differential rates of wages in the docks, for though nominally the wages employed by shipowners and stevedores follow agreements, cases are continually occurring where men are given inducements beyond those laid down in the agreements. Much of the success of the administration of the port of Hamburg was due to the fact that all the port labour was controlled by the port authority. Such a general control by a supreme authority need not interfere with the freedom of the shipowner to control the discharge or loading of his ship, as the Port Authority could let out labour (as they do now in some instances) to work under the supervision and direction of the shipowner.

There is an alternative scheme possible in London which would not invade vested interests, and therefore not excite the opposition to which the above solution would be exposed. This scheme would provide that all port labourers should be registered and be available for work in any part of the Port and be prepared to work on any job within their capacity. In other words, the whole of the work in the Port would be pooled. The number of men on the register might be 10 per cent. in excess of the average total number of men working in the Port. The register would consist of (a) regular men on weekly wages, and (b) preferential men with a guarantee of at least two days' work a week. The preferential men would move up to permanent rank as vacancies occurred. The men would be given, as far as practicable, the work they have been usually engaged on at the time the scheme comes into operation. All men would receive weekly the pay applying to the class of work performed. The registration, appointment, and allocation of men would be supervised by a joint committee of employers and workmen. The work in London is now fairly regular from week to week, and with the stipulation made above as to mobility and interchangeability, preferential men could be practically sure of at least four days' work a week, whilst the cost to the employers of their guarantee would not exceed their contributions under the Unemployment Act. Under such a system the casual man would disappear from the Port.

(b) Much of the unrest in labour is caused by the fact

that masses of men get the same rate of wages. A man of 21, inexperienced, and with no responsibilities is paid for the same class of work, the same wages as the man of 40 or 50. This means that he has no prospects of advancement; indeed, there is the probability of his being regarded as less valuable as an ordinary labourer at 40 than at 21. The only method of his getting advancement is therefore by a general rise in the wages of the class of labour to which he belongs. Or the more intellectual of their class have to find an outlet to their ambition by becoming trade union leaders, where to maintain their position they are compelled to be aggressive agitators against their employers. If a proper minimum wage were established and then increments were given for good service, or grades were provided for promotion as years went on, a docker would have some incentive to produce good work, and not be concerning himself so much about combination with his fellows against his employer. It is the difference in this matter of prospect of promotion of the individual that largely accounts for the difference between the relations of the clerk and labourer to his employer. Trade union leaders do not, however, favour labour being organized on such a basis.

(c) It would be an advantage to the future of labour in the Port if the relations with the trade unions could be placed on a more satisfactory basis. The Authority and other employers have always recognized them as representing the men, have listened to their advocacy, and have made agreements with them for wages and conditions of working. But perhaps because leaders are not always able to insist upon the carrying out of agreements which they sign, it is a fact that agreements have often been thrown over by sections of men without notice or argument. One grave instance of the scrapping of an agreement by the leaders themselves has already been referred to as following upon the agreement of 1911, but subsequent to the armistice few weeks went by without some sudden attempt to depart from signed agreements. As a rule, the leaders speak fairly to the employers on such questions, but it is to be feared that they have not always the courage to speak with the same frankness to the recalcitrants. It may be guessed that they find it expedient to maintain their leadership by occasionally following their followers for fear of

being ousted by an ambitious subordinate. Some of them have so fostered the doctrine that a strike is the only weapon that they find it used against themselves with deadly effect, and so they adopt the precepts of the politicians they so often become, and agree to what they know to be wrong merely to preserve their leadership. The pity of it is that the impossibility of reliance upon agreements made with unions produces a distrust of the idea of trade unionism which is not justified. Moreover, there is the unfortunate view taken by some leaders that they do not want the employers to have a contented staff, as such men become "old soldiers" or "slaves." This prejudice against a contented staff can, without injustice, be attributed to the fear that such a staff might not need the intervention of a trade union and the leaders' occupation would be gone. This is probably also the reason why labour leaders have hitherto been so apathetic when the question of casual labour has been discussed. Permanent labour might be too satisfied and prefer to deal direct with the employer. To keep the labourer in the union fold, the leader has, therefore, to preach the doctrine of aloofness between employer and employed. This appears to be a short-sighted view of the case, as the convenience and benefit of unions as channels for negotiation and arrangement of conditions of employment are indisputable. But this view illustrates the fundamental vice of the inspiration of union policy, which is that the Port exists for the interests of labour alone, and that consequently the union is the thing and not the Port. Hence we find the labour members on the Port Authority who have always been union officials concern themselves with little else than labour interests, and so devoted are they to their theme that without exaggeration it may be said that one-half of the time spent in Port committees is devoted to innumerable points of wages and cognate questions originating in the zeal of local union officials on behalf of their members. The leaders show no real care for the imperial questions of maintaining or attracting trade, the provision of accommodation (where their experience should be useful), or in the all-paramount questions of finance. It is to be hoped that with the growing numbers of the Labour Party, and with their own anticipation of being trusted with the formation of a Government, there may be

found men who, while never forgetting the class whom they represent, will administer enterprises on broader lines than those of incessantly endeavouring to draw upon the tax-payers for an increased share of national wealth to be awarded to one class of the community without having in mind the necessity of contributing an additional share towards the production of that wealth.

(d) The general practice in the Port is to pay labourers daily, the exceptions being the permanent men of the Authority and a few other employers. This is a most undesirable practice. A man taken on by the day and paid by the day takes a view of things circumscribed by a day. It is literally with him "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The men generally desire no change in this respect, nor do the London leaders. At Liverpool there is a scheme in force which, combined with arrangements made under the National Insurance Act, provides for the men, whether extra or permanent, receiving their wages weekly. To adopt the Liverpool scheme at London would hardly be practicable, but the object aimed at is admirable, and it should be educative to all concerned on the subject of casual labour.

(e) It is often said that as the unions fail to realize that the prosperity of the Port is dependent upon their co-operation, the remedy should be found in the intenser application of machinery to the operations carried out. This is an alternative which has been present to dock management for the last fifty years. It obviously becomes the more patent as the cost of labour increases daily. New forms of machinery are constantly being introduced, but the work at docks is not comparable with that at factories. So far, machinery is used in the storage and delivery of heavy cargoes, such as mahogany and teak, in the discharge and housing of grain, where London can claim to have always been in the van of progress, and in the use of conveyor forms of transport for cargoes of case goods where the packages are much of the same size. Recently this conveyor principle has been adopted for meat cargoes, where, however, the object has been not so much cheapening of the operation as avoiding damage by handling. Trucks and piling machinery moved by electric power are also used to great advantage in a limited sphere of action. But the most careful recent study

of this subject does not give any hope of the substantial supplanting of existing labour by new forms of mechanical power, and it is only necessary to state the problem to appreciate the difficulties. Take the most ordinary case of the discharge and delivery of the cargo of an American liner. She will bring usually some thousands of tons of grain in bulk which can be dealt with by the floating elevators very quickly. The rest of the cargo will consist of boxes of lard, bags of flour, bundles of loose hides, cases of canned goods, casks of lubricating oil, bales of flax, and a hundred other varieties of goods and packages all stowed together in the holds irrespective of the owners or destination of the goods. All these goods have to be landed and deposited for sorting in sheds. The sorting is not merely a separation of classes of goods, but first to consignees and secondly to destination via lighter, rail, or cart. At intervals goods come on shore with the package damaged and have to be mended. Others are landed with damage to the contents, which have to be examined to settle the question of liability. Attending the discharge and other operations are the officers of H.M. Customs, who direct certain packages to be examined for revenue purposes. The accessibility of goods in dark holds and the state of the weather are constant variants in the progress of the work. The regulations for protection against fire necessitate that fibres and other inflammable goods should not be stored in the transit sheds. The handling of meat is another problem. When the discharge of all this mixed cargo into the sheds is completed and the goods sorted to the piles, delivery to the conveyance of the consignee commences and proceeds according to the applications. This operation, comparatively simple, has, however, its complications and delays when craft do not turn up to time. Mr. Gattie has made large claims in regard to the handling and sorting of traffic at railways and docks, and he has been invited to suggest a scheme for the application of his clearing-house idea to the London dock systems. But the alternative his scheme presents, whilst it might reduce labour, would be so costly in capital outlay and so doubtful in working that no responsible authority could proceed with it. It would appear, therefore, that it is visionary to place reliance upon a wholesale displacement of labour in the Port by machinery.



TILBURY DOCK
Photograph by the Aircraft Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

(f) A last word on this subject of labour concerns a national aspect of it, but it is more applicable to London than anywhere else, viz., the multiplication of the machinery for dealing with labour questions. It is instructive to set out a list of those agencies with which at the end of the war Port employers were brought into contact :—

1. Two labour members on the Authority.
2. The Port and Transit Executive Committee, who dealt with labour disputes interfering with flow of traffic.
3. Military Service Committee, charged with recruiting and demobilization problems.
4. Port Labour Committee, dealing with the employment of Transport Workers' Battalion.
5. The Dock and Riverside Workers' Union, and other Port Unions for Corn Porters, Deal Porters, Lightermen, Stevedores, etc.
6. National Transport Workers' Federation, speaking sometimes for all the above.
7. All the trades unions connected with engineering and building trades.
8. The National Union of Railwaymen.
9. The Ministry of Labour, including the Committee on Production, and the Chief Industrial Commissioner.
10. Government Committee for general questions of demobilization of labour at ports.
11. Government Committee for casual labour in the Port of London.
12. Whitley Council Scheme.

Peace has brought no relief from the multitude of counsellors, and the conduct of the administration of the Port is becoming more and more strangled by all these devices for cajoling and petting labour. They make the labour world believe that labour disputes are the only things that count. Can it be wondered that with such patronage from the Government Departments, union leaders continually push forward their claims, or, that that section of the public which suffers from interminable labour troubles regards the Ministry of Labour as a Ministry likely to stimulate the propaganda of disputes rather than their extinction ? And what has all this machinery done for the worker himself ? Is he really better off in the conditions of existence ? He certainly is less satisfied, and according to some of his leaders is even verging on a revolution resembling that of his defeated arch enemy. In the abnormal conditions of war he has been taught that high wages are

everything, and only a feeble voice here or there protests that wages are counters and that production alone will give wealth.

A candid enlightening discussion of the economic question never took place during the war, and is being avoided now, because unfortunately the politicians of to-day are more afraid of the people in peace than they were of the enemy during war, and therefore live from hand to mouth. Labour leaders who know dare not tell their followers economic truth. It cannot, however, be long before the idea so fast getting accepted as gospel, that a nation can eternally live on its capital, gives away before painful disillusionment, and then the worker may consider whether his interests are not, after all, more to be identified with those of reasonable employers than with those of the many friends who flatter him now.

No chapter on the future of the Port could be complete without touching on the all-important question of the constitution and powers of its governing body. The story of the existing administration has been briefly told in the previous pages, and the public must judge as to whether it has justified its existence and its continuance in being. In studying this question it will never be forgotten that institutions like ports depend more upon the men who administer them than upon their parchment constitutions. The predominant feature of the constitution of the Port Authority is that no one interest should be able to run the Port for its own benefit. It was pointed out when the Bill was before Parliament that though this was an excellent device for preventing jobbery it might tend to destroy the quality of initiative much required after so many years lethargy in the Port. The danger of a negative policy was, however, guarded against by the appointment of a chairman of great experience and success in business gained by conspicuous untiring energy, assisted by a number of City men as members who had been in the forefront as reformers of the Port. The result is that, whatever criticism may be passed upon the Port Authority, it cannot be said that they have treated their job as an ornamental one. Great demands on time have been willingly met by men who have been unpaid and who get no honour or particular reputation for their pains. Will the future successors of the original

members be so public spirited? The risk is that new members will not have the incentive of the first Board to make a success of a scheme which they had had a share in shaping. Not the least difficulty is due to the fact that the class of City merchant or shipowner whom it is most desirable to have in charge of matters where the broad and experienced view is indispensable is so occupied by his own business that he cannot spare sufficient time to arrive at a considered judgment on port affairs. Failing the maintenance of interest of the highest class of City trader in the Port, the representation of the trade element may be liable to fall into the hands of second or third-rate traders who will exploit the Port for their own benefit by a policy of log-rolling not at all impossible under the existing constitution of the Authority. The importance of keeping the Port efficient is so absolutely vital to the general community that rather than there should be any lowering of the status of membership it would be better to secure the best men by reducing the attendances at committees and entrusting wide executive powers to a highly paid competent chairman and vice-chairman.

Beyond the question of the personnel of the governing body there is that of the area which it should control. The word "Authority" is a misnomer when applied to the Port of London. Whilst the Authority is an authority in the docks and on administrative details of navigation, dredging, and licensing of embankments in the river, it cannot be regarded as the sole authority in the Port whilst the public wharfingers on the riverside are allowed to discharge ships and warehouse goods in competition with the Authority. That this situation was not intended to be a permanent one is evidenced by the fact that in the Port of London Act the Authority was given power, subject to certain procedure, to acquire these riverside premises. No action has been taken since the Authority came into existence, except that negotiations have taken place with some few wharfingers, leading to no result. The war has, in any case, interfered with the financial operation which would be necessary upon any wholesale acquisition of wharf property. From the Port point of view it is inconvenient that there should be a number of irresponsible rivals in the Port with no obligations and restrictions cast upon them in their methods of

doing business, such as the Port of London Act places upon the Authority; and that, moreover, the Authority should be forced to have amongst its members at least one representative of wharfinger interest who is entitled to know and communicate to his friends all particulars and projects relating to the Authority's business without any right on the Authority's part to be present at the councils of the wharfingers. No other port authority is placed in such a situation, and it is no defence of the system that the five members of the Authority who are wharfowners have always most honourably abstained from exploiting this position. This point alone is one which can be urged in favour of the completion of the transaction of purchase of port accommodation begun in the purchase of the docks, by the early purchase of the whole of the wharves affording facilities to the public. But, apart from this reason, there are cogent other reasons for their acquisition. It would benefit traders generally by enabling the concentration of businesses at present split over diverse establishments; it would guarantee equal treatment as to services and rates all over the Port; it should lead to considerable economy in working; and it would also set free many properties which could be realized or used for other purposes. Fear has been expressed that these undoubted advantages might be outweighed by the creation of the monopoly of warehousing facilities in the hands of the Authority. The answer to this fear is that the appointment of the majority of the Authority is in the hands of the traders themselves, and that if justice should be denied to any particular trade by other traders there is an appeal to the Ministry of Transport against any act of oppression or levy of excessive rates. With the removal of this defect there is little likelihood of any questioning of the composition of the Authority.

The recent decision of the Government to place the railways and docks of the kingdom under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport raises serious considerations in regard to all harbour and dock undertakings. The railway companies are owners of large systems of docks which have been built or acquired for the purpose of feeding their railways with traffic. In the effort to achieve this object, railway companies quote rates for dock services in no way commensurate with the cost of the operation. Though they



DELIVERY OF IMPORT GOODS TO BARGES

may even lose money on dock operations they look for their remuneration to the anticipated carriage of goods over their railways. The effect of this form of competition has been to draw away traffic from other ports, privately or publicly owned, not furnished with any weapons of retaliation, and yet bound to maintain a revenue at least sufficient to meet the interest on its financial obligations. Parliament has endeavoured to meet the just complaints of these ports by compelling railway companies to publish separate accounts of their port operations, but the information given is meagre and the protection against a practically subsidized competition is a sham one. The Ministry of Transport Act for the time being affords some real protection, but if eventually the railways are to be nationalized the desire of the railway officials to aggrandize their ports will certainly not be less than now, whilst the power to attract railway traffic by concessions at the docks will be unlimited. In this case the Government docks may be engaged in an aggressive attack on all the other docks of the kingdom. London would not be the worst sufferer, but it would have to be prepared for such a conflict, and it will behove its Port Authority, in common with other dock and harbour boards, to see that any legislation for the control of the railway companies is framed on lines equitable to competing ports. Logically, if it is desirable in the national interest that the means of transport should be completely under the direction of the Government, the docks of the kingdom, as the marine terminal stations of the railways, should equally be controlled by the Government. Of the ultimate results of the immense addition to the number of civil employees in the public service this book is not so concerned to discuss. But it may be pointed out that some amelioration of the dangers of the political pressure thereby certain to be used and more equitable conditions of competition would be secured if the railways were controlled by a body constituted on the model of the Port of London Authority instead of being administered by a Government Department. The alternative favoured in certain Labour quarters, that the next step in the Port's development should be to hand the Port over to the control of the London County Council, does not at all commend itself to the mercantile public, having regard either to the composition

of the council or to the treatment of the Port when it was a department of the older London municipality—the City Corporation.

Whatever form of administration the fashion or mood of the times may design for the Port of London, it can hardly interfere with the development of its trade. Whilst the channel of the Thames is kept clear of shoals and the docks and warehouses are maintained to meet the demands of shipowners and merchants, the market of London—the oldest, the freest, and best in the world—ought as the result of the victorious war to be extended beyond what would have been brought about by the effluxion of time ; and whether the future transit of the world's commerce is to remain with steamers sailing the sea or is transferred to airships sailing the sky, the market will not be displaced. Given efficiency in its operations, a constant alertness to accommodate new forms of trade, labour intelligently applying its strength to work, and a moderate tariff of charges, the future of the greatest port in the world can be regarded with as much confidence as we look forward to the future of the Empire of which it is the capital.

Finis.

APPENDIX I

Port of London

A. STATEMENT OF TONNAGE OF SHIPPING (FOREIGN AND COASTWISE) ENTERING THE PORT WITH CARGOES.

| <i>Year.</i> | | | | | | <i>Tons.</i> |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|--------------|
| 1700 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 435,000 |
| 1750 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 746,000 |
| 1795 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,775,000 |
| 1854 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5,752,000 |
| 1913 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 20,088,000 |

B. STATEMENT OF VALUES OF FOREIGN TRADE OF THE PORT.

| <i>Year.</i> | | | <i>Imports.</i> | <i>Exports.</i> | <i>Total.</i> |
|--------------|----|----|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | | | £ | £ | £ |
| 1700 | .. | .. | 4,876,000 | 5,388,000 | 10,264,000 |
| 1750 | .. | .. | 5,541,000 | 8,415,000 | 13,956,000 |
| 1795 | .. | .. | 14,863,000 | 16,579,000 | 31,442,000 |
| 1913 | .. | .. | 253,879,000 | 157,913,000 | 411,792,000 |

Note.—The returns for 1795 are quoted as having been considered by the Select Committee of 1796. The year 1854 is exactly half-way between 1795 and 1913, the last complete year of normal trade. There are no complete figures of values of trade for 1854 available.

APPENDIX II

Port of London

STATEMENT OF VALUES OF PRINCIPAL GOODS IMPORTED AND EXPORTED
(EXCLUDING COASTWISE) DURING THE YEAR 1913.

Imports.

| | | | | | | £ |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|----|------------|
| Beef | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5,567,000 |
| Butter | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7,869,000 |
| Cars and Cycles | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5,234,000 |
| Cheese | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,732,000 |
| Chemicals | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,803,000 |
| Coffee | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,083,000 |
| Eggs | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,848,000 |
| Gutta Percha | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,002,000 |
| Hemp | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,749,000 |
| Jute | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,444,000 |
| Lead | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,234,000 |
| Leather | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5,563,000 |
| Machinery | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,875,000 |
| Motor Spirit | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,571,000 |
| Mutton | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7,094,000 |
| Oats | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,795,000 |
| Paper | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,529,000 |
| Rubber | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 12,399,000 |
| Silk Manufactures | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,864,000 |
| Skins and Furs | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6,305,000 |
| Sugar | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7,443,000 |
| Tea | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 13,486,000 |
| Timber | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7,775,000 |
| Tin | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 9,021,000 |
| Wheat | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7,753,000 |
| Wool | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 21,458,000 |

Exports.

(a) British Manufactures and Produce.

| | | | | | | £ |
|---------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|
| Apparel | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,630,000 |
| Arms and Ammunition | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,600,000 |
| Books | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,495,000 |
| Boots and Shoes | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,080,000 |
| Chemicals | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,045,000 |
| Cotton Manufactures | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 9,936,000 |

Exports (continued)

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|
| | | | | | | £ |
| Electrical Goods | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 4,046,000 |
| Iron and Steel Manufactures | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5,538,000 |
| Machinery | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5,784,000 |
| Tobacco | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,735,000 |
| Woollen Goods | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7,140,000 |

(b) Foreign and Colonial Merchandize.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|
| | | | | | | £ |
| Coffee | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,728,000 |
| Copper | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,068,000 |
| Hemp | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,222,000 |
| Jute | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,047,000 |
| Leather | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,632,000 |
| Rubber | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6,565,000 |
| Skins and Furs | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 4,316,000 |
| Tallow | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,409,000 |
| Tea | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2,290,000 |
| Tin | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6,108,000 |
| Wool | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 8,275,000 |



C. R. S. Kirkpatrick M. INST. C. E.
Chief Engineer





(Private)
Coastguard
Station

Black
Grounds

Bay

EET

ND

Dendman's
Point

S - E

Mary's
Bay

Light

St Mary's Marshes

Seaward limit of Port Authority

Nautical Miles
2

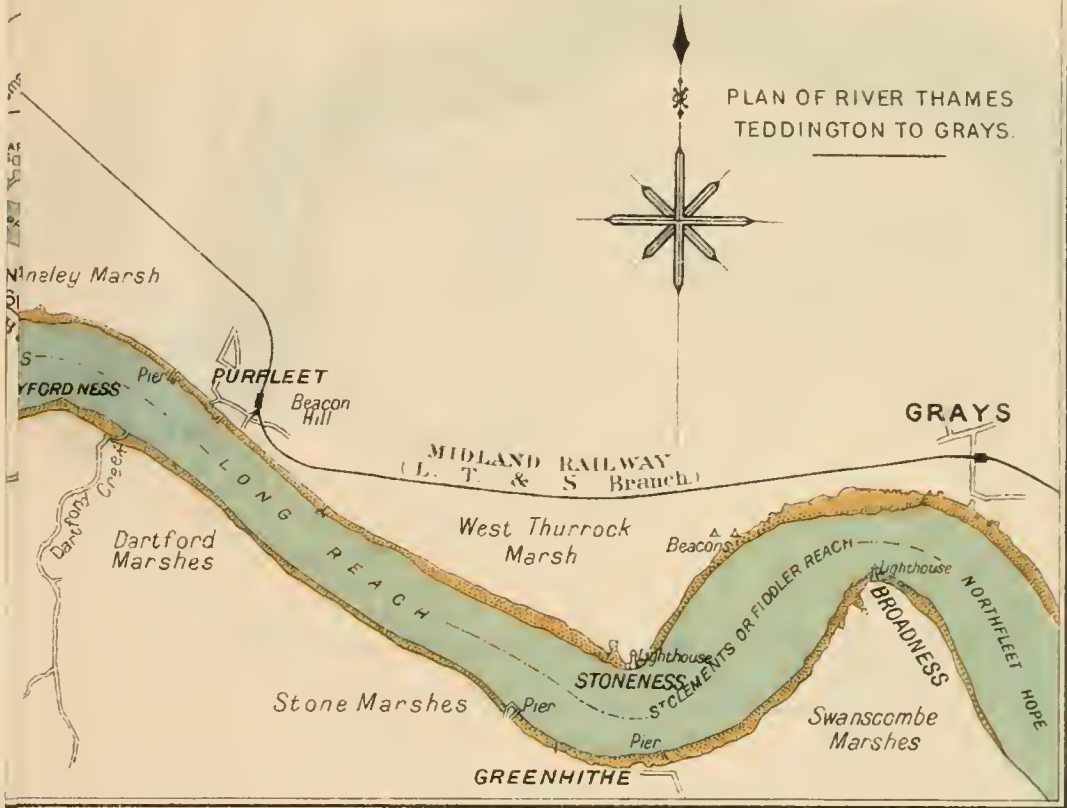
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2

C. R. S. Kirkpatrick
M Inst C.E.
Chief Engineer

PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY. PLAN OF RIVER THAMES. FROM GRAYS TO WARDEN POINT.

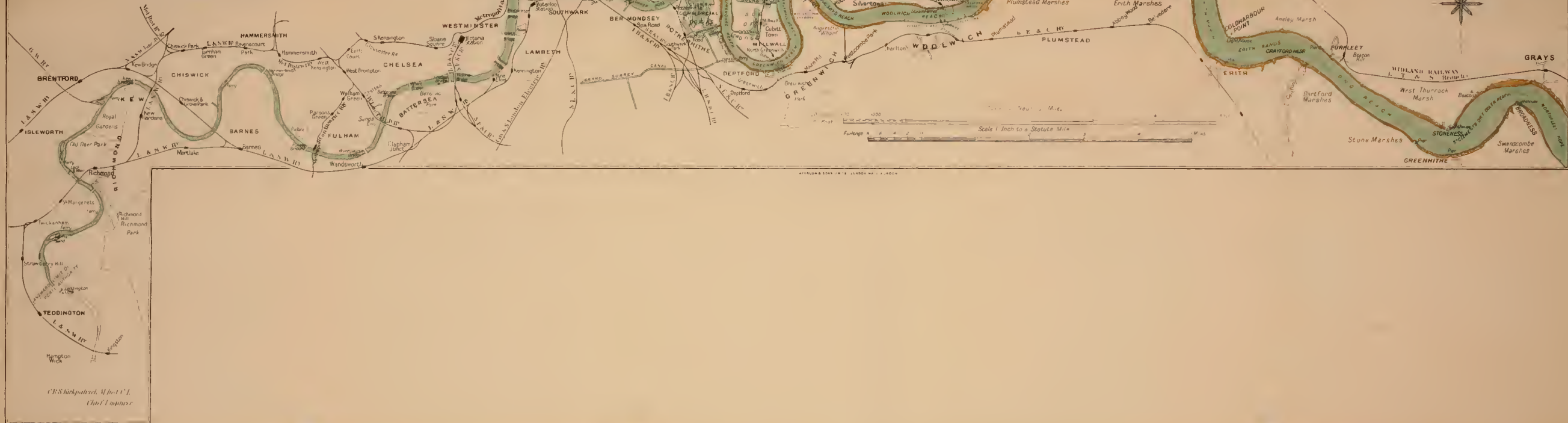


PLAN OF RIVER THAMES
TEDDINGTON TO GRAYS.



PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY

PLAN OF RIVER THAMES,
FROM TEDDINGTON TO GRAYS.



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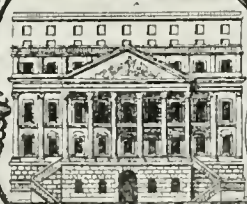
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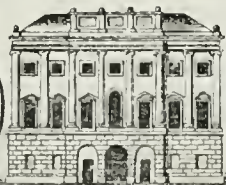
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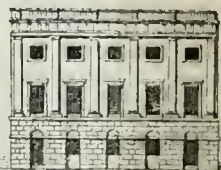
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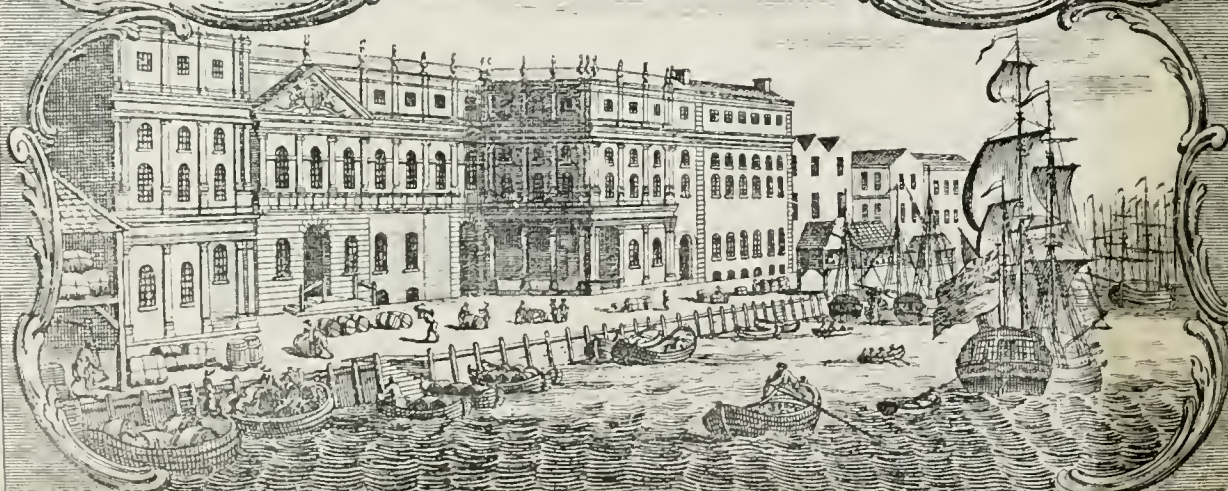
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